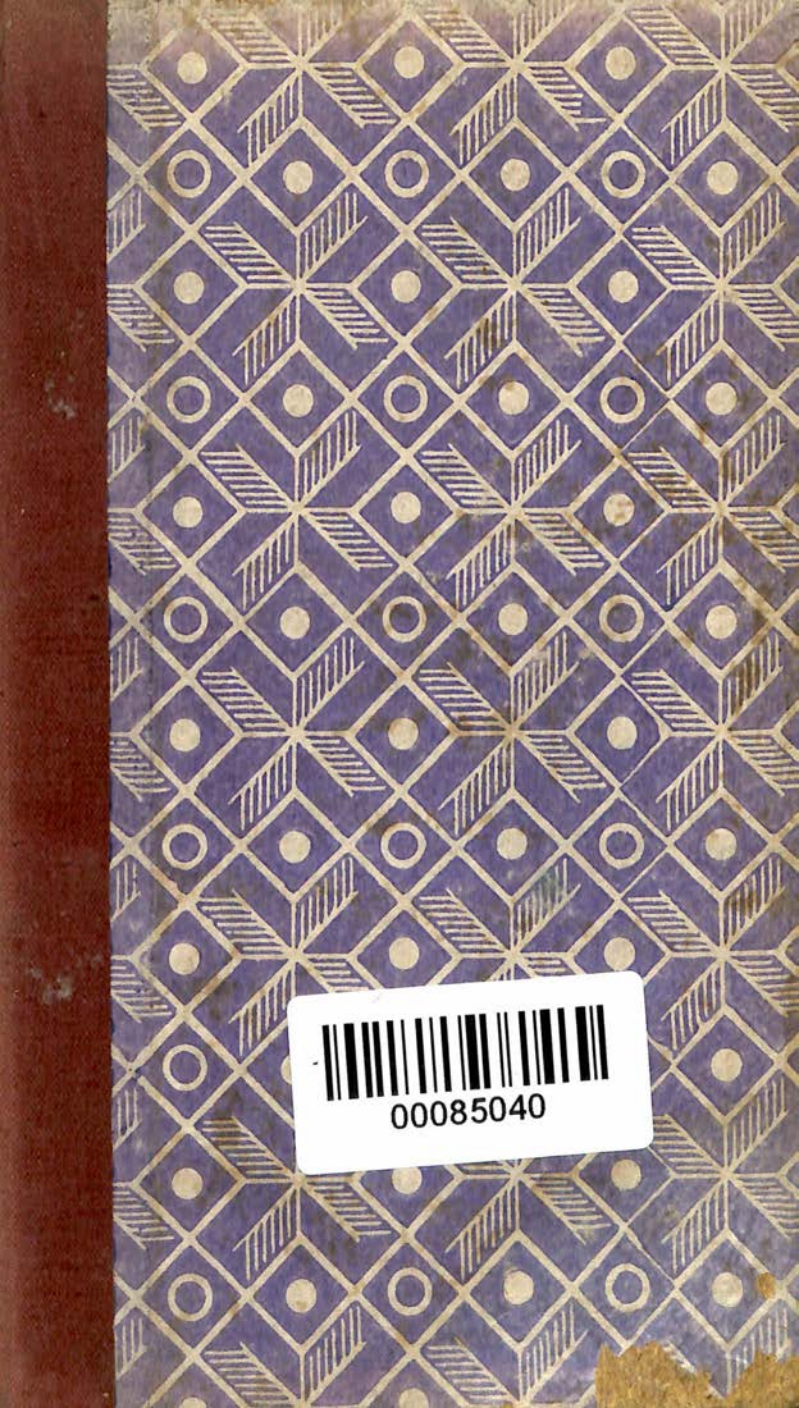
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THE

CITY OF THE MAGYAR,

OR

HUNGARY

AND HER INSTITUTIONS

IN 1839–40.

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BY MISS PARDOE,

AUTHOR OF

"ITS AND TRADITIONS OF PORTUGAL," "THE CITY OF THE SULTAN," "THE BEAUTIES OF THE BOSPHORUS," &c.

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THE CITY OF THE MAGYAR.

CHAPTER I.

PESTH—THE INUNDATION OF 1838—POSITION OF THE CITY—FREEZING OF THE DANUBE—PREPARATIONS—ENCROACHMENTS OF THE RIVER—DESTRUCTION IN THE CITY—SUFFERINGS OF THE INHABITANTS—FALL OF THE DERRA PALACE—THE RUINED MERCHANT—PRECAUTIONS OF THE PALATINE.

ERE I speak of Pesth, and describe the present state of the city, I consider it expedient to enable my readers fully to comprehend the nature and extent of the fearful calamity by which it was visited in 1838; and I am the rather induced to do this as I have been enabled to obtain the best information on the subject, as well as to consult a work written immediately after the catastrophe by

an Hungarian physician,* which is considered in the country to be the best and most truthful account ever given of that terrible visitation; and of which I have largely availed myself.

The city of Pesth is built along the left bank of the Danube, from which its riverward line is only separated by a quay of a few toises in width; and in many places the houses advance, even yet nearer to the lip of the stream. The soil occupied by the town and the whole stretch of country for miles about it, is one waste of light deep sand; while the houses are (or perhaps I should rather say, were) nearly all built over cellars, magazines, stables, and drains. Only sixty or seventy years ago the fair city of Pesth was comparatively an unsightly collection of ill-constructed dwellings, erected rather for individual convenience than for general benefit or effect; and the faubourgs even in 1838 were in most instances low, mean, and squalid; all the houses being built of unburnt bricks and timber, and roofed with shingle.

At the beginning of January 1838 the Danube

* "The Inundation at Pesth, with an account of its Moral and Physical Effects," by Dr. Augustus Schoepff.

had already attained an unusual and somewhat alarming height, and the water flooded all the drains and subterraneans in its immediate neighbourhood, whence it was obliged to be drawn off; after which the *débouchures* of all these underground inlets were carefully closed.

I mention this circumstance, because it became ultimately evident that the stoppage of these subterraneans was one main agent in the destruction of property which afterwards ensued; and as it moreover proves that when the Danube received its first coat of frost it was unusually high; while at the same time at Soroksár, a couple of leagues below the city, a branch of the river having become choked with ice, caused the overflow to which I have alluded.

The Danube was entirely frozen over and firmly closed between the 5th and 6th of January; and a continuance of snow and extreme cold so severely operated upon it, that the ice gradually increased to upwards of three feet in thickness.

During the 8th and 9th of March the stupendous mass began to yield, but after flooding the lower part of Buda it again settled. It was considered,

however, to wear so menacing an appearance that a dyke, six feet high, was flung up the whole length of the city between the houses and the river; when the authorities and inhabitants of Pesth, satisfied with this precaution, and the stoppage of the drains where they communicated with the Danube, and remembering that during the inundation of 1775, the water had never risen to the height of their newly-erected barrier, abandoned themselves to the hope and belief that before the river had attained the level of the dyke the ice would break up, and be carried away by the strength of the current.

Some few individuals there were, nevertheless, who looked upon the frost-chained giant with more anxious forebodings; and who asked themselves, what, *if* this comfortable occurrence did not take place, was likely to be the fate of the devoted city? The answer of their own reason was by no means consolatory, and consequently a few, a very few, ventured to take precautions against the possibility of disaster.

It is almost needless to explain that among these wise individuals was Count Stephen Szé-

chenyi, who supplied the *bel-esprits* of Pesth for a time with food for mirth and sarcasm, by the apparition of a roomy barge just within the *porte cochère* of his residence.

Little did those who scoffed imagine how soon they would become suitors for the loan of that same laughter-inspiring boat!

The jests had not time to become stale upon the lips of those who uttered them, ere they were fearfully forgotten.

Late in the afternoon of the 13th the river appeared to become more threatening in its appearance; and it was considered necessary to use every precaution which might prevent its flooding the quays. Immediate orders were given to this effect; and the scene was described to me by an eye-witness as fearfully dramatic. In every direction were to be seen labourers toiling to fortify the dyke; and adding such other means of defence as the impulse of the moment suggested: but still no serious apprehensions were entertained, for it was believed that this was the last effort of the mighty river to free itself from its frozen load; and that, the feat accomplished,

all peril would be passed. And thus men moved about chatting, and speculating, and even jesting: excited into false, but nevertheless loud, spirits; giving advice when it was neither sought nor followed, and seeming rather to be actors in a wild dream than a peril-teeming reality. The greetings of acquaintance were heard among the crowd; the ribald jests of the thoughtless; and now and then even the laughter of women, who tried to trifle away their fears when they were chidden for them: but at eight in the evening the heavy peal of the alarm-bell boomed out; and doubt, and hope, and jest were at an end!

When its iron tongue first broke upon the air the scene along the river-bank was most extraordinary. Workmen and soldiers, lighted by torch-bearers, were still actively employed in strengthening the defences of the dyke; crowds of people from all quarters of the city thronged the quay, and impeded the passage of the waggons which were moving to and fro laden with sand, to fill the breaches; strong men were carrying timber to different points to increase the resistance of the temporary breakwater; and it is calculated

that not less than sixty thousand persons must have been collected on the shore; when about ten o'clock the swollen river suddenly made a new and mightier effort than any which had preceded it, and burst the dyke in several places; and the wild waters laden with jagged ice, rushed onward with resistless violence, driving before them the cowering crowd, who fled appalled and breathless before the swift pursuit of this strange and terrific enemy.

Down fell the night, as if to aggravate the terrors of the hour; and men hurried on they knew not whither, pursued by a danger against which the bravest could not contend. There was no laughter now upon the air! The shrieks of women, and the groans of men; mothers screaming for their children, and children wailing for their mothers: the quick sharp sound of flying footsteps upon the frozen earth; and over all the rushing, dashing, headlong voice of the emancipated waters, made up the frightful diapason.

By an hour past midnight several quarters of the city were flooded to the height of twenty-seven feet, and in several streets large boats might be

seen moving from house to house; while at each extremity of the suburbs the ice-laden river poured like a torrent upon the town; and in those suburbs themselves the poor inhabitants had barely time to escape with life, leaving their little possessions to the fury of the treacherous element to which they had so long fearlessly trusted.

On the morning of the 14th whole streets, undermined by the body of pent-up water which filled the subterraneans beneath them, fell with successive and deafening crashes, burying alike men and animals amid their ruins; and perhaps this was the most awful moment to a spectator, of all that fatal time.

I remember being told by the Archduchess-Palatine, when she was one day conversing with me on the subject of this frightful inundation, that as she stood at one of the windows of the Palace of Buda, and looked down upon the suffering city, seeing whole ranges of buildings sink and disappear in the watery waste about them, she felt her brain reel and her heart sicken, as a vague feeling grew upon her that the whole town would be ere long swept away!

From the 14th to the 15th the water continued sullenly and steadily to increase, spreading wider and wider, sapping and overthrowing dwellings, and drowning their panic-stricken inhabitants. But the day of horror—the acmè of misery—was the 15th itself. Pesth will probably never number in her annals so dark a day again—she might perhaps not be enabled to survive such another;—the mad river, as that day dawned, rioted in ruin; and many looked upwards to the clear cold sky, and marvelled whether the Almighty promise was forgotten!

Thousands of men, women, and children, homeless, houseless, hopeless beings, clinging to life when they had lost nearly all that made life a blessing—parents, and children, and sisters, and lovers,—the young, helpless in their first weakness, and the old, trembling in their last —the strong man whose weapon was stricken from his hand by a Power against which the strongest contends in vain—the philosopher, who in all his abstraction had found no preparative for so hideous a death as this—the mother whose hope had withered as her babe died upon

her bosom, and who clung to life rather from instinct than from volition—the fond, the beautiful, the delicately nurtured—all were huddled together during that fearful day upon the narrow spaces scattered over the town and suburbs which the waters had not yet reached. And as it wore by, every half-hour added to the devastation around them; houses and buildings which had survived the first shock, seemed to have been preserved only to add to the horrors of that day; many of them fell and perished from roof to base; others became rent by the heavy dashing of the waters, and through the yawning apertures the wasting tide poured in, and ruined all it touched; while to add to the confusion, in some quarters of the city the heavy barges which had been procured to remove the sufferers from their threatened houses, broke loose, and went driving onward through the streets on the crest of the foaming waters.

Many individuals declared that they felt the shock of an earthquake on the night of the 13th, an assertion which added to the terror of the people; but this fact has never been verified, and it

is probable that the impression was originated by explosions of the fixed air which was pent up in the subterraneans; and which as the impetuosity of the water broke in, rushed out at the other extremity of the drains with a sound like thunder. It may be imagined what an immense hydraulic pressure must have been exerted on these underground channels, when it is stated that in a thousand places in the middle of the streets, courts, and gardens, the water forced its way in small jets from the earth; and to that pressure may be attributed in a great degree the ruin of the city.

To attempt a description of the horrors of the 15th would be a vain as well as an ungraceful task; but nothing tended so utterly to bring them to a climax as the fall of the extensive Derra palace in the New Market-place. In vain did men murmur to each other that the building had been defective in its construction, and unsound in its foundations: their misery was deeper than the cheat which they sought to put upon themselves; and from that moment those who yet enjoyed the shelter of a roof looked on their tem-

porary asylum with suspicion, and a general fear grew among the multitude that the whole city was crumbling about them.

Horror accumulated upon horror; the young and the fragile, unaccustomed to exposure in drenched and clinging garments, to the bleak wind of that chilly season, began to droop and sicken. Even amid the terrors which surrounded them, fathers of families who sat silently among their quailing children remembered that they had suddenly become beggars; and they glanced from their wretched offspring to the leaping and foaming waters about them, and listened to the crash of the falling houses which burst at intervals upon their ears, till they began to smile vaguely and fearfully, and to muse the wild musings of madness.

One miserable man—a merchant in prosperous circumstances—was seen early in the morning of that memorable day, standing with folded arms and gloomy brow, gazing upon the wreck of what had so lately been his happy and comfortable home. The roof had fallen in, for the foundation had failed; and one of the side walls having given

way beneath the pressure, a section of the house was laid bare, and the waters were rioting and brawling over his ruined property. The hour of noon arrived, and still there stood the sufferer, stern, and silent, and motionless: twilight fell, but he stirred not from his watch; nor was it until the increasing darkness hid from his view the spectacle of his worldly overthrow, that he started from his seeming reverie, and laughed, and shouted, and clapped his hands in wild and savage glee! Nero jested upon the flames which were consuming Rome, because they worked out his revenge—the maniac merchant gambolled, and mowed, and mocked the lashing waters that had beggared him —nor knew amid his frenzy, that he was making merry over the ruins of his own reason!

The 15th of March was, however, sufficiently terrible to the most sane and collected; and it is questionable whether the poor victims of temporary hallucination, shocking as it was to contemplate their wretchedness, did not escape much real suffering. All was misery, desolation, and despair; and the firmest nerves must have quailed

beneath the sights and sounds which everywhere assailed them.

It having been found necessary to extricate all who had lingered in the suburbs from their frail and failing houses, a number of boats were busily plying in every direction, and as there was no time to waste on forms or convenience, the terrified people were rapidly put on board and carried off to places of comparative safety; thus it frequently occurred that one family was distributed among several of the boats; and as their after-direction was entirely dependent on circumstances, and frequently decided by the information or advice of the moment, parents became parted from their children, husbands from their wives, brothers from their sisters—and, in too many instances, as it afterwards appeared, the separation was eternal! Each overladen boat toiled on to the most promising place of refuge, and as its freight was landed upon some spot which the water had not yet reached, the misery of the multitude was deepened by the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the groans of men, who found

themselves suddenly parted from dear ones whom they had until that frightful moment believed to be beside them!

By eleven o'clock at night, throughout the whole city there was not a foot of dry ground, save in the New-Market-Platz, the Joseph-Platz, the Franciscan-Platz, and the courts of the Lutheran Church, the County-Hall, and the Invalid Hospital, and these were crowded both by men and horses; while many families of the highest rank were huddled together in the rude wooden booths erected in the Market-place, or sat in their carriages for days and nights exposed like the rest of the population to the sufferings of cold and damp.

While yet the fury of the element was at its greatest height, and all was want, and anguish, and desolation throughout the city; while thousands of wretched beings were still without food or shelter, the Archduke-Palatine sent his eldest son, the young Prince Stephen, to speak peace and comfort to the miserable citizens; and despite the danger of the mission, the high-hearted youth accepted it without hesitation.

Nor was it a light duty which this noble scion of the House of Hapsburg received as a boon at the hands of his Imperial father; for the river was pouring down angrily, laden with masses of ice driven onward by the current, and threatening ruin to the unwary bark with which they might chance to come in contact. There were no attentive menials awaiting his disembarkation on the opposite shore with ready services and obsequious words. He went to meet misery, famine, and madness; but as he stood erect in the boat he cast not one look behind to the safe asylum which he had left—he waved his arm encouragingly towards the sinking city—he urged on his panting and trembling boatmen—and after a weary and perilous passage, his little bark began to thread the streets of Pesth.

No sooner had his appearance brought comfort to the sufferers—for there must have been comfort in the conviction that abandonment was not superadded to misery,—than he vigorously applied himself to the task of mitigating the wretchedness by which he was surrounded. With his own hands he distributed the bread with which his boat was

laden; he had a kind and a hopeful word for all; and it is certain that the exertions and sympathy of the Palatinate family on the occasion of this dreadful calamity, will be as durably impressed upon the hearts of the inhabitants of Pesth, as though they had been graven upon marble.

CHAPTER II.

M. JOHN LÓNYAI—ABSENCE OF CRIME—SUBSIDING OF THE WATERS—BARON WESSELÉNYI—ROYAL SYMPATHY—THE LUDOVICIA—COUNT SZAPÁRY—TEMPORARY DWELLINGS—MORTALITY—EXTENT OF HUMAN ENDURANCE—MORAL EFFECTS OF THE CALAMITY—BARON JOSEPH EÖTVÖS—MADAME LASZLO.

NOTHING encourages hope more surely than a renewal of order; and to produce this the Palatine at once appointed M. John Lónyai, a Royal Counsellor, Commissary of Supply, with strict instructions to suppress all outrage or excess; but to the lasting honour of the Hungarians be it recorded, that amid all the confusion and insecurity consequent on the calamity by which they had been visited, and with a population of between 50,000 and 60,000 inhabitants, scarcely a theft was committed in the city of Pesth during the whole period of the inundation. Every arrangement which could be made under the miserable circumstances

in which the inhabitants were placed, was speedily effected for their preservation and comfort, both by the admirable Archduke and the county officers; and day and night parties of authorised persons traversed the city in every direction, maintaining order, and distributing bread.

During the night of the 15th, the ice partially freed itself, and moved down with the current; and, consequently, on the morning of the 16th, the passage across the river to Buda was accomplished without much difficulty. In the course of the day the water subsided very considerably, and it was a curious spectacle to see the number of rafts, boats, and even doors and shutters filled with people, which were traversing the city streets in search of missing relatives or friends, and even trusting themselves on the treacherous Danube in order to escape to the heights of Buda. Commissioners were appointed to test the safety of these conveyances, to hold back the unsafe, and to regulate the lading of the others; but on occasions like these every moral bond is loosened, even if not flung off, and men during periods of intense suffering do not yield willingly to the dictates of

authority: thus many a raft was launched upon the still angry river which could not bear its owner to the shore of promise; and had it not been for the exertions of some brave spirits who devoted themselves to the dangerous duty of succouring their drowning fellow-creatures, the dread amount of the perished would have been swelled by some thousands.

Foremost among these noble and heroic men was the Baron Wesselényi, the attainted of the Government. Powerful as a Hercules, and bold as strong, he put out in his boat alone; and spurning alike danger and fatigue, spent entire days upon the Danube, cheating the choking waters of their prey, as the insufficient barks of his half-maddened countrymen, overladen and ill-governed, were occasionally overturned in their contact with a sheet of floating ice, or by the imprudence of their occupants.

It is positively asserted that he rescued no less than two hundred individuals during one day; and yet when the inundation had subsided, and that affairs had once more resumed their customary course, it is painful to be obliged to add that

the Baron Wesselényi, whose name, coupled with a blessing, was upon many a lip, was arraigned for a few hasty words, and condemned to a weary captivity.

What a blessed, what a holy mine of thought for his solitude must have been his heroic and Christian efforts in behalf of his fellow-creatures in their extremity! No prison-casement could shut out the light of such a joy as that!

On the 16th many thousands of the population passed over to Buda in the steam-boat and the barges which ply upon the river, and were there received with the most unbounded charity and welcome. Every house was open to them; they were everywhere sheltered and succoured according to the means of their hosts; and while hundreds were provided for in the mansions of the nobility, there was no artisan, however poor, whose humble roof did not cover an inhabitant of the sister city.

In the palace all were lodged who applied for help, without distinction of rank; one common misery had levelled the whole population in the eyes of its benevolent and princely occupants.

The Archduchess took under her personal care the women, the children, and the sick; nor did she fail one day to visit and to console them; while the royal table was furnished only with the most common food during the whole period of the calamity.

Nor were the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages more deaf to the cry of suffering than the more wealthy indwellers of the Imperial city. Many scores of unfortunates found shelter and assistance in the hamlets about Pesth; and where the needy peasants had only bread to offer, they shared it with their temporary guests.

On the 17th, thanks to the exertions of the authorities, there was no longer any want of food. All the public buildings which could be made available were turned into receptacles for the houseless; and in the Invalid-Hospital and the Ludovicia (a building erected for an Hungarian Military Academy, but ultimately unappropriated,) no less than twenty thousand persons found shelter and subsistence provided for them by the foresight of the Archduke Joseph.

By the 22nd not only all the city, but the sub-

urbs also were free from water; and it was already possible, although through a great depth of mud, to wander over the scene of desolation.

It was a terrible spectacle! and many a heart swelled, and many a lip trembled when its wretchedness lay revealed. Nor was the moral less than the architectural ruin—exposure, exhaustion, and anxiety had in a few days done the work of years upon a great portion of the inhabitants; and when they again gathered about their devastated homes, each looked into the face of his neighbour and saw there only the reflection of his own suffering.

After the first panic had subsided, and that men's energies began to be reawakened, efforts were made by all to redeem, if possible, some remains of their lost property; and the whole city was one scene of haggard and breathless labour; while the authorities on their side exerted themselves to render the least ruined of the buildings fit for temporary occupation; established receiving-houses for the poor, and organised hospitals.

To the largest of these asylums I have already alluded—the Ludovicia—where from the second

day of the inundation so many persons crowded for safety, that it is estimated that at one period there were not less than ten thousand individuals within its walls.

Extensive as are the proportions of the building, the half-naked, half-famished crowd mingled together in its vast chambers and corridors, filled it in every part with filth, squalor, and misery. Men and women, children and grey-beards, youths and maidens, all were mixed in what appeared to be utter and hopeless confusion; when the authorities resigned the government of the edifice to the Count Francis Szapáry, who generously casting off every thought of self, consented to devote alike his time and his energies to the comfort of his suffering fellow-creatures.

This judicious and warm-hearted Magnate at once applied himself zealously to the task of reducing to order the chaos of misrule which circumstances had committed to his authority. The Ludovicia contained the very dregs of the people, and it is consequently not to be supposed that there was not moral as well as physical evil to combat; but he did not shrink from the task.

In undertaking it he had resigned the comforts and indulgences of a luxurious home, and the society of one of the loveliest, if not *the very* loveliest woman in the country; but the Countess Szapáry lent herself willingly and gracefully to the noble devotion of her husband; and for two long months he endured companionship with the rudest and least civilized mob which could probably have been collected in the city. The men were separated from the women and placed in different apartments, each under the superintendence of an inspector: cleanliness and decency were enforced; and food, provided by the civil officers, was equably supplied to the whole number.

In addition to this act of self-immolating charity, Count Francis Szapáry erected at his own expense an immense wooden tenement, wherein he sheltered and fed for a considerable time a number of unfortunates who had no other roof to cover them.

To comment upon such conduct were to dishonour it.

From the 20th, the temperature rapidly improved, and in a few days the streets became

passable to all; but such was the general devastation that two thousand four hundred people still remained in the Ludovicia on the 2nd of May.

In that month wooden houses were built, and large subterraneans excavated; and as the expense necessary to erect such dwellings was very trifling, the roofs being covered with straw or any other cheap article which could be procured, and the foundations, walls, and chimneys formed of mud, thousands of persons set themselves to work to secure a home; and by degrees just beyond the city a small subterranean village was built where great numbers passed the ensuing winter, and a portion of which is still in existence.

When all these circumstances are considered in detail it would naturally be expected that at least one third of the population must be destroyed either by moral or physical suffering; and it would be extremely difficult to decide which of these two evils would be likely to exceed. The panic was necessarily universal. This was not a strait from which the strong man could deliver himself by his strength, nor the brave man by his sword. Some there were who had continued calm,

and almost incredulous of great calamity until the night of the 13th; but from that period all had been alike crushed by the magnitude of the catastrophe; or had only been aroused from torpor and despair into a state of false and wearing excitement still more pitiable. All were necessarily more or less affected by the awfulness of the scenes through which they had passed; and self-possession was scarcely to be expected of any one.

The most heart-rending spectacles were encountered in some of the suburbs. In one wretched lane where the ruins of a house projected over the water which had risen nearly to the depth of ten feet, many people, both young and old, were seen hanging hopelessly by their hands over the death which they could not escape, for none could approach to rescue them!

Thousands of doors, and shutters, and other flat pieces of timber were used as rafts, when they were quite insufficient for the purpose; and thus it frequently occurred that the miserable man who endeavoured to escape by such means, no sooner trusted his weight to the treacherous refuge, than

it failed beneath him, and he sank, dragging after him all those in his immediate vicinity.

Whole families were occasionally rescued after they had endured for forty-eight hours, and sometimes even for a longer period, the extremes of cold, hunger, and despair. Mothers were found benumbed, with their dead infants still clasped to their bosoms,—aged people in their beds, where the wild waters had drowned them as they lay—and children in the hiding-places to which in their first terror they had fled, and where they had perished in their fear!

But these horrors astonished no one; they were the necessary consequences of the frightful visitation which had fallen upon the city.

The anatomist, the physiologist, and the practical physician—all who are interested in the wonderful and intricate mechanism of the human frame—would have had difficulty in believing that the frail machine could have endured the hardship and calamity through which many of the victims of the inundation passed without latent physical consequences. Thousands remained from twenty-

four to forty-eight hours immersed in water, frequently without any shelter, and not seldom without nourishment. The daughters of very respectable and wealthy citizens of the Theresian suburb, delicately formed, reared with tenderness, and unaccustomed to every species of labour, passed a day and a night in assisting to barricade the outlets of their houses; and when they discovered that all their painful toil had been useless, spent a second night in transporting all their portable effects from the flooded ground-floors of their dwellings to the upper chambers. But even this sufficed not; when as the foundations of the street gave way, roof after roof fell in, and the peril from above rivalled the danger from below; while they lingered through a long third night of suffering, where agony of mind was blent with physical exertion.

In the Schiffmanns-Gasse a frightful example of human endurance occurred; the wife of a small tradesman, who had become the mother of a child only a few hours previously, and whose husband chanced at the moment to be absent, heard the rush of the water into the street, and leapt out of

her bed, anxious to save as much as she could collect together of her little property; she was alone in the house, and the night was rapidly advancing. She toiled until her solitary candle was burnt out,—she heard around her the crash and the uproar of ruin—and amid the darkness she was unable to form an estimate of her actual position. On either hand, the houses were falling one after the other as the water undermined their foundations; and anxious to ascertain as nearly as possible her actual situation, she ran into the yard attached to her dwelling, which rising on the side of a height was yet dry; and unfortunately for her, the spot appeared in consequence so safe that she neglected while there was yet time, either to escape from the premises or to summon help.

When it was too late she perceived the misery of her self-delusion; the water rose above her knees, and as she struggled became breast-high; but there is no strength like that of desperation, and she waded back towards the entrance of her house until she was immersed to her chin, when she secured a frenzied hold of the half-broken door, to which she clung with the tenacity of

madness until the dawn; when some humane individuals, who had not, during the night, been able to approach the scene of wretchedness, took her off in a boat exactly twenty-eight hours after the birth of her child, and deposited her among a thousand other unfortunates in the Protestant church. The infant was dead in her arms.

There she paced up and down the damp and chilling edifice screaming for her husband, her dead baby, and her property; and beseeching every one she met to assist in saving from the wreck of her possession enough—only enough to save her from dying a beggar; and thus she spent four-and-twenty hours in constant movement and excitation, without changing her clothes, which were dropping with water, and without taking the slightest nourishment. On the following day she sank down exhausted, slept for six hours, and only complained when she awoke of excessive debility; she had no sensation of either hunger or thirst, and when urged by the charitable care of those around her to partake of their food, the quantity which she compelled herself to swallow was so small that it scarcely seemed sufficient to

sustain life. By the 2nd of April, although still weak and languid, she had recovered her health, and a week afterwards she resumed her household duties. Physically, she had sustained no permanent injury, but she has never smiled since.

A labouring man in the same suburb was alone in a house which gave way suddenly from roof to base, and by great exertion succeeded in clambering on a beam which had been only partially displaced. In this perilous position he remained for fifty hours without nourishment, and without daring to yield to the desire to sleep which, even hanging as he was above destruction, stole over him from the intensity of the cold. At the termination of that period some persons who were escaping on rafts, rescued him from his miserable situation, and supplied him with a broken door on which to escape; but his weight proved too much for the frail machine, and he was several times upset; and thrice so exhausted by his exertions that had it not been for the efforts of others he must have perished by drowning. For three days and nights he suffered acute pain, and long resisted food, but he ultimately recovered, and

now enjoys as perfect health as before the event took place.

An infant of eighteen months old, which had only begun to walk a few days previously, was by some accident forgotten in the confusion, in a house in the Schiffmanns-Gasse; and it was seen by some neighbours clinging to its little bed, and crying with terror, the water having already risen to its chest. With great difficulty it was rescued, and it did not suffer the slightest illness from the exposure.

Another infant was found lying in its cot uncovered and without nourishment of any kind; and was at first believed to be dead; but although it had been there for two days and a night, as the wretched mother afterwards declared, it was ultimately restored, and still lives.

I have cited these instances of extraordinary human endurance from the work of Dr. Schoepff, which contains many others, and some of them still more dreadful; but these will suffice for my purpose as tending to prove that where the mind is very powerfully acted upon, the body becomes comparatively insensible to suffering. An in-

controvertible proof of this axiom is afforded by the fact that several delicate women labouring under chronic diseases, long unable to walk, and some of them even to move unassisted, struck by terror at the death which menaced them, on the night of the 15th escaped through the windows of their houses by means of ladders into small boats; and far from suffering from the exertion, after a continued moral excitement of three days, recovered the health of which both they and their physicians had long despaired.

The author proves that people of the lower classes and young children were more affected by physical disease than persons of refinement and education—another proof, were any wanting, in favour of the same self-evident proposition; the absence of the great moral antagonistical excitement having necessarily exposed them in a more powerful degree to bodily influences.

Such is the rapid sketch which I have considered desirable to give of the frightful catastrophe which for awhile converted Pesth into a city of wailing and desolation, and excited the sympathy of all civilized Europe. It will be subject for history

like the earthquake of Lisbon—one of those terrible landmarks of the Divine Power which appear to be intended from time to time to arouse mankind from their lethargy, and to awaken them to the acknowledgment of their own weakness.

A great deal of property was destroyed, which has been estimated at about seven hundred thousand silver florins; but Europe, aroused by so awful a visitation, collectively contributed to repair this minor portion of the evil; and the magnificent sum of three millions of silver florins enabled the sufferers to resuscitate their city.

The waste of human life, when the circumstances of the inundation are considered, was comparatively trifling, for it is calculated that not more than two hundred persons perished; and this fact can be accounted for in a manner so honourable to the Hungarians both individually and as a nation, that it will come upon my description like a burst of sunshine after a tempest.

There were a few instances, but happily only a few, where avarice, that narrow-hearted and uncompromising vice, steeled men's souls even in

the midst of this general peril, and boatmen were seen to strike at the drowning wretch whose whole remnant of property seemed insufficient to these monsters to purchase the safety of their fragile barks, as they hurried by to the rescue of some wealthy sufferer who could pay them every inch with gold; and as much as fifteen pounds were given by more than one individual to be conveyed a distance of fifty yards; but no other crime was committed in the city during the whole period of the calamity; while many, hitherto only illustrious by their high rank and ancient family, became tenfold more so by their heroic and noble self-devotion in the cause of their suffering countrymen.

To the active and admirable measures, as well as to the liberality of the Archduke-Palatine, I have already alluded; the high-hearted prowess of Prince Stephen, the gigantic and extraordinary exertions of the Baron Wesselényi, and the self-devotion of Count Francis Szapáry, I have also recorded; but there were yet many others who equally merit mention—so vast a list, indeed, that I dare not further venture on it, than merely to note

the names of Baron Albert Pronay, the Administrator of the County, who spent hours breast-high in the river, dragging to land the exhausted and sinking sufferers who had trusted themselves to insufficient means of escape, and who had flung themselves into the very jaws of death in striving to evade its shadow; and of M. Adolph Eckstein, an Advocate, a man of Herculean build and great courage, who saved many lives by his physical exertions and sound judgment.

Nor will it surprise any one to learn that my sex were not backward in furthering the work of charity; though I must be satisfied with quoting one name out of scores; nor do I particularise it, because the lady is a personal and valued friend of my own, but because I never hear her name mentioned unaccompanied by comments which are beyond all the earthly titles that King or Kaiser can bestow.

She is a woman of fortune residing at Buda in a spacious residence, which in the moment of common calamity she at once resigned as her own; and braving danger, cold, and the possible excesses of a houseless mob, she set forth, and collected to-

gether all the unfortunates whom her roof would cover. I have heard it positively asserted that she fed, sheltered, and partially clothed one hundred and fifty individuals during several weeks.

When peace and security had been for some time restored, Baron Joseph Eötvös, the son of the Dignitary to whom we have been largely indebted since our arrival in Hungary, and himself one of the most distinguished literary men in the country, compiled a work after the model of the *Livre des Cent et Un* at Paris, to which every writer of eminence contributed a paper, and published it for the benefit of the sufferers in the inundation.

The preface appended to this volume was not the least striking and talented feature of the book—"Desolation had fallen upon the earth, and the waters had covered the face of the city;" thus it ran:—"and amid the ruin and the dismay which made men's hearts stand still, I heard a voice that brought comfort to every spirit—'Come to me, ye who mourn,' it said, 'and I will shelter you—come to me, ye who hunger, and I will nourish you.' It was the voice of a woman—of her to

whom I dedicate this volume—it was the voice of Madame Laszlo!"

Great deeds, involving human suffering and human misery, are often written in gold, as though they had been achieved without sacrifice or sin; and their renown is handed down to posterity for men to marvel at—but good deeds require no blazonry—they are graven on the hearts which they have saved from bursting, and then recorded in heaven by the registering angel in characters of light. Truly both will have their reward!

CHAPTER III.

PESTH—BUDA—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES —THE DANUBE—GREEK JEWESSES—TRAVELLING COMPANIONS—SCHÜTH ISLANDS—A STOPPAGE—A TRANSFER—KLEIN-BODAK—GONYO—KOMORN—DOTIS —GRAN—THE BASILIQUE.

WHEN we were at length arrived in the beautiful city of Pesth, strange to say, though on our passage through it when travelling homeward from Constantinople in 1836 I carried away a delightful recollection of its *ensemble*, I was not in the slightest degree disappointed on a longer look. The contrast between the two shores, linked together by a bridge of boats upwards of twelve hundred feet in length, is peculiarly striking; on one side Imperial Buda, the original and ancient capital, spreads stern and still, clasping the dark heights with houses and convents, clothing their sides with habitations, and cresting them with

lordly palaces and bristling fortresses: while right and left along the river bank stretch its long faubourgs, where you may distinguish at intervals an old Turkish tower, a remnant of the times when the Moslem held sway in the chief city of the Magyars, or a stately monastery, upon whose spire the cross now glitters in the sunlight, unprofaned by the vicinity of the crescent.

There is a strange stillness about Buda; a sort of calm regality; and you ever find your thoughts flung back upon the past as you climb its abrupt acclivities, or wander among its giant-looking houses. But you have only to repass the bridge, and the present, the active, ambitious, energetic present is at once before you. Tall, handsome, Italian-seeming terraces face the river, from which they are only separated by a wide quay, the line occasionally broken by a noble portico, a stately freize, or the towers of a church; and all so fresh, so bright, and so indicative of growing prosperity, that you feel at once that Pesth, though now regarded as a gaïish intruder on the metropolitan pretensions of time-hallowed Buda, will one day become the capital of a country which is even now

like a giant slowly awakening from a deep death-sleep; and that while Ofen remains a monument of warfare and subjugation, rife with memories of strife and struggle, and of the days when Hungary was unconscious of her moral strength, Pesth will grow into splendour, and her quays and warehouses be heaped with the riches of this teeming land.

As if to mark the distinction more fully between the rival sister-cities, the shore on which Pesth is built is one wide plain. No mountains intervene for leagues to impede the progress of the laden waggons which convey their freight into her streets: the river flows almost on a level with her quay: and the Matra hills are but a distant framework to the picture.

In 1686 Pesth was rescued for the last time from the Turks, and no vestige remains of its five previous periods of Moslem rule: unlike Buda, it has neither tower nor tomb to tell the tale: many of its streets are wide and handsome, and the noble blocks of building which are rising on all sides give promise of still further improvement.

One of the most prominent edifices on the river

is the German Theatre and Redoute, probably one of the largest and best-proportioned rooms in Europe, being nearly as spacious as the Egyptian Hall in London.

All this I have learnt *en passant*, but as I never before saw the banks of the Danube between Presburg and this place, ere I proceed with the results of my "lionizing" here, I must give a brief account of our previous passage.

We left the city of the Diet at the uncomfortable hour of five in the morning, just as the daybreak was struggling with the dense vapours that hung upon the hills, folded the forest trees in a heavy mantle of fleecy moisture, and swept dankly along the surface of the river.

The last bell summoned the latest loiterers on board, precisely as the clocks gave intimation of the hour, and the chimes of the neighbouring convents rang out sharply a summons to the earliest mass. The deck was crowded, and the cabins no less so: in the saloon, or ladies' cabin, the group was singular enough; and to one who had not been in the East, highly interesting.

I had merely gone below to ascertain the nature

of the accommodations, but lost no time in introducing my mother to as thorough a representation of a Turkish harem as it is possible to see out of the country. A party of females, consisting of a mother, daughter, and daughter-in-law, attended by nurses and five or six young children, Greek Jewesses, on their way home from Presburg to Temesvar, had established themselves at the upper end of the cabin, and were squatted upon their cushions, with pyramids of rich furs piled about them, sultry as the weather promised to be at mid-day.

The elder lady of the party held an infant on her knee whose sweet little face was half hidden by the profusion of black glossy hair that fell about it. She was dressed in a petticoat of showy chintz and a jacket of deep blue silk, lined and trimmed with sable, and worked at the seams with gold; her *fëz* was bound round her head by a painted handkerchief, and beneath it, falling on her forehead, and descending as low as her ears, she wore a row of gold ducats lying the one over the other; while a similar chain encompassed her throat, and crossed over her bosom. She must

have been very handsome in her youth, but the salient features of her race had become harsh with age, and her voice was cold and imperative, save when she addressed the children who were sporting about her; and then, like all Oriental women, she became gentleness itself. The two sisters wore head-dresses precisely similar to the one I have described, save that, to replace the braids of hair which their law does not permit them to display, their high pale foreheads were bound with a black silk fillet on which the coins rested; costly cachemires replaced the silken jacket, and about their necks they wore four rows of fine pearls, each the size of a pea, clasped with a clasp of brilliants.

The whole thing was in short so Oriental; the costume, the grouping, and the low voices rather murmuring than conversing, that I could have fancied myself back again in Stamboul; while the stately beauty of the younger lady so forcibly recalled forms and features upon which I shall never look again, that it almost made me sad.

The deck, on our departure from Presburg, was crowded with Hungarian nobles; but as the morn-

ing advanced they gradually disappeared; those to whom we were known occasionally chatting with us for half an hour, and then becoming invisible again. There was, however, nothing mysterious in this; and we did not require to be told that they were at cards, for we never had made a passage, however short, with a party in any part of Germany, who did not beguile the time in this manner.

The weather meanwhile was delicious; but for a considerable distance the banks of the river were flat, marshy, and uninteresting; and the stream itself so shallow that its surface was covered with eddies; its waters being exhausted by the fact of its throwing out two considerable arms, which do not again fall into the parent stream for a distance of nearly fifty English miles. The main body of the river as it pursues nearly a straight course, forms two islands between its channel and its minor branches, the greater and lesser Schütt; but they by no means improve the character of the scene, for although the larger of the two produces good corn, the aspect from the water is dreary in the extreme, the only timber being marsh-willows,

dwarf aspens, and stunted beeches; while the smaller islet proclaims itself a swamp even in the midst of summer, by its dense undergrowth of reeds, and those dank-looking trees which subsist chiefly upon moisture.

But uninviting as were these sister-islands we were not permitted to steam swiftly by, and forget them, as is the hap of most travellers; for on arriving near a little bay, we saw the smoke of the return-boat curling above the boughs of the pigmy forest, and met half a dozen of her crew who were awaiting us on the shore, to announce that the extreme heat of the two previous days had caused such excessive evaporation, that the river had become too shallow to admit the passage of the Arpád so high as Presburg; the remedy being an exchange of lading and of boats, an operation which we were assured by the Captain of the Nádór, our own good vessel, would not occupy more than an hour. In England we should consequently have looked for a delay of sixty minutes, already provoking enough when you are anxious to arrive in a strange city before nightfall; and my mother was beginning to lament accordingly, when I consoled

her by the assurance that one German hour meant three English ones, and that as they measured their time in this country as they did their land, we were quite certain to have a moonlight view of the Danube before we reached Pesth; and had therefore nothing to do but to arrange accordingly.

With this agreeable conviction we went on shore; a hundred and fifty *désœuvrés*, without a single prospect of amusement. We had already commented on the weather, calculated time, decided on the shade of every dress, and the make of every coat on board—and there we were—there was nothing to sketch, nothing to see, and nothing to do! The Greek Jewesses and their furs and cushions were duly landed; we were amused for five minutes by watching the carriages put on shore, and then we all congregated like a flock of gulls on the edge of the little bay, to note the progress of the first boat-load of passengers that put off from the Arpád.

Half a dozen floating mills occupied the sweep of the bay, and one of their broad, flat-bottomed barges had been put into requisition for the trans-

port of the crowd which thronged the deck; and I never shall forget what a Noah's ark she seemed when she touched the shore. Half-a-dozen Magnates, a pilgrim on his way to the Holy Land, serge-clad, and missal-laden, and a filthy Jew with a mysterious package folded in a dirty cotton shawl, were succeeded by three or four fashionable women, who in their turn were elbowed aside by sturdy peasants, threadbare traders, and mothers bearing infants in their arms, who were increasing the confusion by their shrieks of terror.

There was no ennui after this debarkation: almost every one had encountered an acquaintance, and hearty greetings were exchanged on all sides. The boat carried its return freight from our own fellow-passengers; and a beginning once accomplished, we all began to speculate jestingly on the probable period of our further detention.

The name of the desolate spot on which we had thus become involuntary Crusoes, I found was Klein-Bodak, such being the appellation of an invisible hamlet at some distance from the shore; a more considerable village on the other

bank, likewise out of sight, being called Grosse-Bodak. I do not recommend any one to stop there who can avoid it.

Four voyages across the bay with the floating ark, and a couple with the boats of the steamers, one of which was gallantly secured for us by Baron H——, transferred all the "live stock" of both vessels; and as we fortunately had but two carriages on board, our own and a light caléche belonging to a German Countess who was our fellow-passenger, the exchange was actually made in very little more than the three hours on which I had calculated; and when we had once reached the spot where the Arpád lay, and where she was only separated from the shore a plank's length, the scene was really pretty enough. The day was intensely hot, and all the people who had preceded us were dispersed among the beeches which most opportunely fringed the river, and grouped in every variety of attitude—some were sleeping, some conversing, a few reading, and a great number—smoking—but all looking patient, and tranquil, and resigned; and very unlike what a party of our own active countrymen, or a bevy

of "go a-head" Americans would have looked under such circumstances.

But as everything must come to an end, so did our detention: the bell rang to summon the stragglers on board, the plank which had been our temporary bridge was drawn after them: the ragged children whom the prospect of gain had lured from the mills to the vessels had picked up their last kreuitzers; and away paddled the Arpád on her way back to Pesth, but not before the saucy Nádór, who was not hampered with carriages, had fired her farewell gun to let us know that she had the start of us.

A few scattered villages lying along the lip of the river, and here and there, where a bend of the stream drives the current more briskly onward, a fleet of water-mills; strange-looking machines suspended between two boats, and generally consisting of rough planks rudely put together, at once a mill and a dwelling; or, more welcome far, a group of tolerably-grown forest-trees, succeed to the islands, ere the boat arrives off Gonyo; a straggling town, dottéd with a few pretty cheerful-looking houses of a better class, seated among

their leafy vineyards, and situated on a steep bank, which must secure it from the effects of those overflowings of the Danube which render its vicinage so generally hazardous.

Hence the shores improve a little in appearance; at intervals a small vineyard, or a patch of Indian-corn, peeps from between the stretches of timber; while glimpses of distant hills touched by the sunlight give them an added interest. Herds of cattle wander along the border of the stream: huge rafts, looking like floating villages, and frequently impelled onward by a string of sixty or seventy horses, are towed slowly against the current; and the river Raab flows into the Danube, adding to its strength and volume.

The next town which succeeds is Komorn, which is very delightfully situated, being only parted from the river by some meadow-land studded with trees.

As a town it contains little that is picturesque from the water: but its fine fortress, distant about half a mile, and built at the southern extremity of the Schütt immediately above the junction of the Waag and Danube, on an abrupt point of

land which seems to stand in the river, is a noble feature in the landscape. It is a virgin fortress, which has as yet suffered only from the shock of an earthquake; and the Komornians pride themselves greatly upon its impunity, though their neighbours somewhat saucily quote against them a well-known French proverb which says that "Forteresse sans assaut, et femme sans amant ne succombent jamais."

Be this as it may, it boasts of Matthias Corvinus as its founder, and has been rebuilt and strengthened during the present century: while on the opposite shore of the river a lesser fort has been lately erected, by whose assistance it would be easy for the garrison of Komorn to rake the Danube up and down, and bar all hostile passage. The ramparts of the main fortress stretch along the edge of the stream to the end of the promontory; and a floating bridge connects the two shores.

The next town is Dotis, where I remarked nothing worthy of notice except the very oriental-looking domed tower of the church; it is sheltered by high land in the background, and a

perfect fleet of flat-bottomed boats and barges lay moored in front of its riverward street: the shores themselves, however, in its immediate vicinity assume a totally new aspect; lofty banks of sand, bare and sterile, gradually give place to a hilly chain of luxuriant vineyards, and as we passed the rich purple fruit was distinctly visible among the large bright leaves.

The most extensive and valuable portion of this teeming range, is the property of the Counts Esterházy and Zichy, and produces an excellent wine called Neszmühl, which is much esteemed by the Hungarians.

We were now approaching Gran, and as Gran is said to be one of the principal "lions" of the Danube, I had already asked twenty times at what hour we should arrive there, and had prepared myself both for wonder and admiration. I had been told on all hands of the almost matchless Basilick—the temple raised to God upon the ruins of an ancient fortress—a place of strife turned into a house of prayer—a cathedral built upon the living rock, and mirrored in the waters; even my hitherto irreproachable "hand-book"

for once turned traitor, and I read in legible characters, "It is an Italian edifice, surmounted by a dome, and faced with a handsome portico of thirty-eight pillars." Who will not excuse my impatience? I closed the book, carefully keeping my paper-knife between the pages which promised me such enjoyment; and I began, as I am too apt to do, to form imaginary pictures of "the most splendid modern building in Hungary." I built up the peristyle with great satisfaction to myself, and then read again: "the dome is eighty-two feet in diameter"—the edifice grew before my fancy; I remembered Stamboul, and the gorgeous Basilick of Gran seemed to be a second Solimaniè; when as I sat mentally gazing on the visionary temple I had raised, a familiar voice exclaimed close at my elbow: "*Enfin, Madame, nous voici à Gran.*"

And there we were indeed, slowly swinging round at the base of an abrupt, and somewhat precipitous rock, crested by a huge and shapeless mass of timber and stone-work overtopping a range of mouldering walls and dismantled towers, among which it was evident that the hand of man had

been at least as busy as the tooth of time. Behind one ridge of tottering masonry, softened but not concealed by the trees which grew about them, the eye fell on a range of conventual-looking buildings, weather-stained, and evidently in a state of partial decay; while scattered houses, and stunted timber mingled with the remnants of feudal strength.

The imagination of my Hungarian friends and the information of my anticipating hand-book had caused me to build a *château en Espagne*, which one glance at the intended Basilick sufficed to crumble into dust. Its dimensions are enormous, but as yet it boasts externally no one distinctive feature—dome there is none—the pillared portico is a thing in futurity; and from the river it might be a county prison, or a national asylum, or a manufactory. Remember, that I say *from the river;* should I visit it on shore, I may find reason to think otherwise: but although it is certain that after passing the point of the rock on which it stands, and obtaining a good view of its main front, its extent renders it imposing, I cannot at present say anything

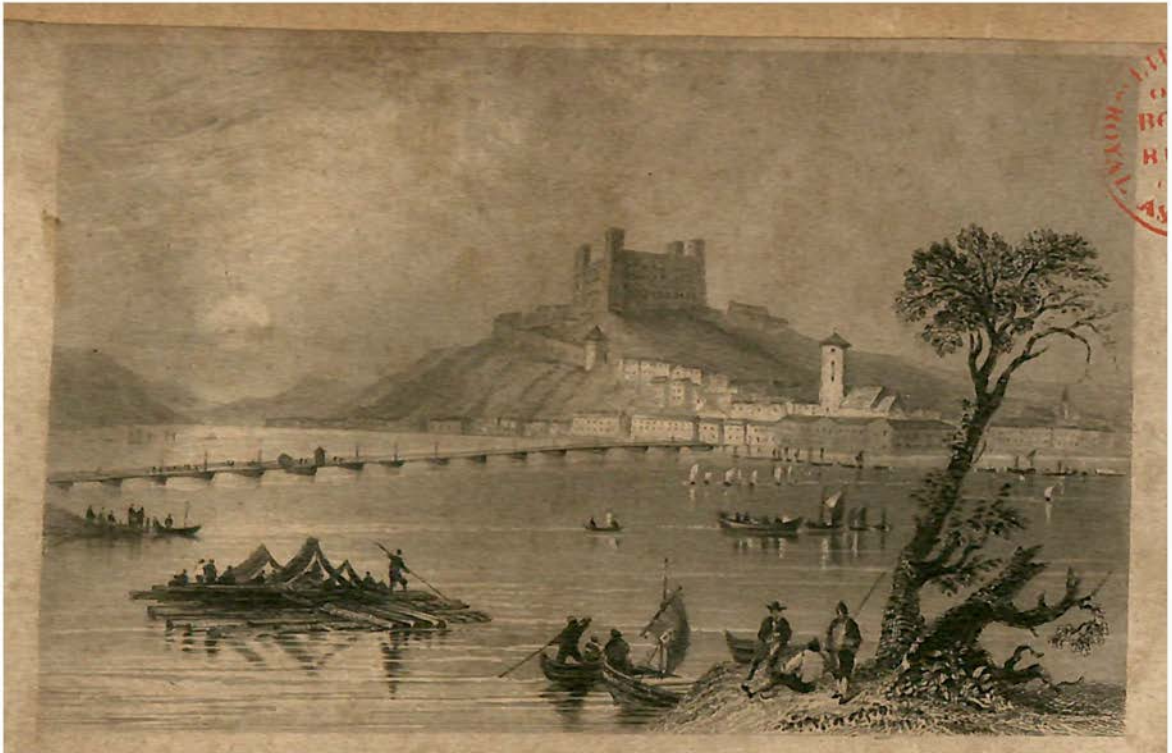
more interesting in its behalf. I am told that the interior is very magnificent, being lined entirely with red marble, highly polished; but here again I am incompetent to offer an opinion; and meanwhile a very demonstrative friend of mine told me the other day when we were speaking on the subject, that the first time he walked into the midst of it, he fancied himself in the middle of a very well-cured ham!

I will resume our passage in my next.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF GRAN—PORPHYRY MOUNTAINS—VISSEGRÁD—VÁCZ—SANTA MARIA—A CHEERFUL SITUATION.

My disappointment with regard to the Cathedral of Gran, must not, however, induce me to omit all mention of the city itself, which has a fine aspect from the river. It has a population of nearly twelve thousand souls, and is the See of the Prince-Primate; the magnificent prelate whom I have already described to you. Luxuriant vineyards come up almost to its streets, and surround many of the suburban houses; and its churches stand well for scenic effect. It must have been extraordinarily picturesque before the ruins of the fortress were removed to make way for the new structure, the rock on which it is built jutting out boldly into the river as if to close its passage;


PRESBURG.

and then as the boat passes the point, spreads wider as it recedes, revealing the town beyond, with its ecclesiastical edifices, its tufts of forest-trees, and its intervening gardens. A bridge of boats connects the city with the shore and village of Parkeny.

Gran may indeed fairly be said to be the first link of a chain of landscape beauty to the voyager on the Danube between Presburg and Pesth, for the city once passed, the river, hitherto so capricious, gathers up its volume in a more contracted channel; while on either hand a range of porphyry mountains, connected with the chain which frames in the picturesque and fertile valley from which the town takes its name, raise their bold and irregular masses, with a variety of outline, and alternation of light and shadow truly beautiful; and there is such a stillness above and about you as the boat cuts her way through the yielding waters, that you seem to have been suddenly transported into a new world; nor is the illusion destroyed when you at length arrive off the ruin-cumbered rock of Vissegrád, one of the grandest things on the Danube, and rife with associations

both of history and romance. It is not my intention here to garble either, for although one of my travelling companions was kind enough to give me a *résumé* of all as we glided beneath the rock, I was so preoccupied in gazing on the stately ruins, that I brought away nothing beyond a confused *melée* of beauty and bloodshed, Christian Kings and Turkish Sultans, pomp, pageantry, outrage, and revenge.

Imagine a tall, abrupt, and precipitous rock, rising almost perpendicularly from the river, and crested by a cluster of towers and battlemented walls, evidently once of great strength, but now mouldered and battered into the most irregular and picturesque outline. From this vast mass of ruin a straggling wall, buttressed at intervals, and following in an intricate zigzag all the inequalities of the rocky height, stretches down nearly to the lip of the stream, where it terminates at a lesser fortress consisting of three towers, one of which is of great circumference, and five stories high above ground, one range of dungeons being hollowed in the living rock. The remaining portions of the ruin are less defined, although their form and substance

are still sufficiently apparent. The principal tower is still known as King Solomon's tower, from the fact of its having been the prison of that monarch towards the termination of the eleventh century—but I must not suffer myself to be deluded into talking of the associations of Vissegrád, until I have wandered among its ruins.

It was with great regret that we lost sight of this noble object; and, as if to increase the feeling, the heights on our left hand shortly afterwards receded, the river made a sudden and most extraordinary bend, running due south instead of eastward, as it had hitherto done; and weary of being pent in by its rocky barrier, threw out two arms, which encircled a flat and unsightly tract nearly fourteen miles in length, known as the Island of St. Andra.

The charming summer palace of the Bishop of Waitzen (Vácz), on the right bank of the river, was the next object which drew our attention; it stands in the midst of a richly-wooded valley, backed by lofty hills, with the river flowing before it, and its wide park-like grounds stretching on all sides to a considerable distance. It is by far the most English-

looking *plaisance* I have seen in the country, and one might really fancy it a villa on the Thames, were it not that the country about it is of a grander character. It is also remarkable as having been built by the Cardinal Migazzi, who founded the Cathedral of Waitzen, and is hence called Migazziberg.

The cathedral town of Vácz succeeded, but by this time the twilight had gathered about us, and ere we reached Pesth the glimmering of the lamps along the quay was the only indication of its vicinity. The guns were duly fired to announce our arrival, and in half an hour we were safely lodged in the Hotel of the Seven Electors in the Waitzner Sasse, the Bond-street of the city, where apartments had previously been secured for us.

We chanced to arrive on the eve of the Santa Maria, always a great Catholic festival; and wearied by the day's voyage, we retired to bed in the hope of a long night's rest; but this was not to be, for about midnight we were awakened by the sound of guitars and voices beneath our windows; and tired as we were, it was impossible not to steal to the casement to listen to the ex-

quisite serenade with which a party of gentlemen were "making the air vocal" in honour of some fair damsel whose name-day permitted them thus to pay her homage. When we had heard the melody to an end—and melody indeed it was of the finest and most scientific description—we quietly stole back to sleep; but at daybreak the sonorous chanting of a priestly choir aroused us once more, and a long procession of women and girls, whose shrill voices responded to the deep bass of the assistants, passed along the street, accompanied by banners and crucifixes innumerable; when, just as they disappeared, the drums of an Austrian regiment awoke the echoes of the Theater-Platz, a large square in our immediate vicinity; and the troops, four deep, defiled along the street, scaring away every hope of further slumber.

Such was our first night in Pesth; and the following morning we were congratulated on the situation of our apartments, which enabled us not only to see, but also to *hear*, everything that passed in the city!

CHAPTER V.

DISTINGUISHED ACQUAINTANCE — THE GRANDE MAÎTRESSE—THE ARCHDUCHESS-PALATINE—THE PALACE OF BUDA — THE STATE SUITE — THE ARCHDUKE JOSEPH—THE GARDENS—THE BLOCKSBERG—THE LEGEND—THE CONVERSIONS OF ST. GERARD.

THERE are few things to which I have a greater aversion than *prôné*-ing my foreign acquaintance, and the distinguished persons with whom my wanderings bring me in contact, and writing volumes full of twaddle, in order to parade princes, counts, and barons, like the ghosts in Richard, before the eyes of my readers; as though I had succeeded in other countries in forming connections from which I was shut out in my own, a habit which has obtained too much with travellers of late; but nevertheless, there are circumstances in which silence must imply either insensibility or ingratitude, where, as in the case of the amiable Archduke-Palatine, the exalted rank of the individuals to whom you are indebted

for kindness, becomes an honour to yourself, and a proof of their own disinterested condescension. Thus, then, I feel compelled also to mention the flattering reception which I met with from the Archduchess Maria Dorothea, to whom His Imperial Highness had obligingly written; and who, instead of admitting me to a formal presentation, did me the honour of inviting me to her table the day after my arrival here. The note of the amiable Countess de Thurn, the *Grande Maitresse du Palais*, which was couched in the most flattering and gracious terms, named the hour of two as that at which dinner would be served; and I accordingly crossed over to Buda at what would seem to our English prejudices a most unseemly season, in order to obey the Imperial summons.

The approach to the Palatinate Palace is very precipitous, the height on which it is built being inferior only to the Blocksberg, the highest rock near Buda. The road is truly regal, being of great width, well planted with horse-chestnut trees, and admirably kept: and while on the right hand the noble timber of the palace-garden is perceptible

above the ancient and war-battered wall, you look from the left across an extensive vineyard, upon a wide stretch of the time-honoured city of Buda, rising amphitheatrically against the side of the Blocksberg, and stretching far away over the valley.

An old Turkish round tower, of that peculiar construction which widens towards the base, has been suffered to remain as a buttress to the exterior entrance; and its dark and solid mass of discoloured stone contrasts forcibly with the modern masonry of the capacious arch. Hence, constantly ascending, we arrived at an outer court, or platform, surrounded by stabling and offices; and then turning abruptly to the right, passed under a second fine archway, above which, on the inner side, a marble cannon-ball, also a relic of the Moslem, has been built into the brickwork; and having crested the rock, we found ourselves in a wide area, enclosed on three sides by the lofty walls of the Palace.

The edifice is of immense size, and in the Italian taste; and the stone stair by which the principal corridor is approached, with its tall

sentinels both above and below, is extremely handsome. Having ascended this *escalier*, I was conducted through a long suite of state apartments, several of which were hung with fine tapestry, to the head of a second stair, guarded like the first, and thence along a stone corridor to the reception-room of the Princess. On entering I was most kindly welcomed by the courteous *Grande Maîtresse*, and presented to the Provost of Pesth, a stately ecclesiastic, wearing a chain and cross of gold, the insignia of his rank; and in a few moments the Archduchess herself entered from her private apartments.

It will, of course, be expected that I should say something of the *personelle* of so distinguished a lady as the sister of the Queen of Würtemberg, and the wife of the Archduke Joseph of Austria, and yet I almost feel as though I ought not to enter into detail on the subject. I shall therefore simply state, that Her Imperial Highness is tall, with large brown eyes full of the sweetest and most gentle expression, and an expansive brow giving assurance of great intellect. But the charm of the Archduchess-Palatine is her beautiful

simplicity; for although no one admitted to her presence could for one moment forget her exalted rank, she never makes it felt either by word or look; her dress, her manner, and her habits, all partake of this most rare attribute among the great—there is a repose about all that she says and does; and it is impossible not to guess at once the origin of this harmony of bearing—not content with being great, the Archduchess has taught herself to look beyond this world for happiness; and it is the calm of a heart at ease, and a conscience at peace with itself, which invests her with a tranquil gracefulness beyond the reach of courts.

After I had been honoured with a welcome full of the most earnest kindness, the Princess led the way to the dinner-room, and motioned me to the seat at her right hand. Our party received no addition; and ere we took our chairs, each made the preparatory prayer in silence, the Archduchess being of the Reformed Church, and consequently differing in faith from her attendants. I have seldom made a more agreeable repast; for with all my respect for the exalted rank of the illus-

trious lady by whom I was seated, there was so much genuine and kindly interest in her manner, that it was impossible to feel ill at ease when conversing with her; and when we retired from the eating-room, and that, at her desire, I placed myself on a sofa near her, while we talked of my own dear England, of troubled Turkey, and of the thousand topics of these eventful times, I felt that the moment in which I should be dismissed must come too soon.

During the hour of conversation which succeeded to the repast, I was surprised to see that the Provost remained standing; and was consequently not astonished at the alacrity with which he opened the door of the apartment as the Archduchess at length rose, in order to expedite my departure.

When the Princess had retired, the Countess of Thurn obligingly accompanied me through the palace; and as we recrossed the suite by which I had entered, I had leisure to remark the noble proportions of the ball-room, with its numerous handsome chandeliers of cut crystal, and its large pier glasses panelled into the walls; and to ex-

amine a range of busts of the Imperial family occupying two marble consoles in an adjoining saloon, of which those of the Palatine and of the Archduke Rudolph were the most remarkable, the first from its Hungarian, and the other from its ecclesiastical dress; the extraordinary likeness throughout all the members of the house of Hapsbourg being so great as almost to identify them.

Thence we passed into the apartments occupied by the former wives of the Palatine, and in which they had both expired. The first of these noble ladies was the Archduchess Sophia of Russia, and the second a Princess of Schomberg. Of the former the memorials are rife throughout the whole suite of rooms; the hangings and decoration of many of them having formed a part of Her Highness's elaborate and costly *trousseau*. Two, which are hung, and entirely fitted up in *rococo* of genuine Chinese manufacture, are magnificent in the extreme. In one of these the walls are covered with gold dragons raised in embroidery on a ground of crimson satin; and in the other a ground of white of the same material is covered with needlework in coloured silks, presenting a rich confu-

sion of birds, beasts, and plants. Then there are vases, and tables of malachite, verd-antique, and alabaster—déjeuners of Sèvres and Dresden porcelain, and Bohemian crystal—and innumerable articles of *virtù* all brought as a portion of her dowry by the Russian bride—no wonder that the present consort of His Imperial Highness should have selected another quarter of the palace as her residence.

The tapestry (also from St. Petersburg) with which some of the other rooms are lined, is remarkably beautiful; but to me the great charm of the Buda Palace, was the splendid view from its windows. I could scarcely tear myself from the balcony to look at the gilded bed of the Emperor, or even to follow the *Grande Maitresse* to the gardens.

The Archduke is an enthusiastic horticulturist, possessing both taste and knowledge of the science; and thus his hanging terraces, clinging to the side of the rock, offer a succession of beauty.

Without being actually spacious, these gardens at each descent present a totally different scene; to the Dutch parterre, formal and flower-laden,

where the bees, whose very motion is music, hum their perpetual song, succeeds a stretch of shrubbery, where light and shadow play pleasantly through leaves and blossoms; then again comes a French *plateau*, with ranges of hothouse plants, seeming to keep guard over a marble basin, where a score of tortoises are sunning themselves on the surface of an artificial rock—and lastly the *Jardin Anglais* with its smooth lawn, its shadowy walks, its scattered flower-beds, and its magnificent magnolias. And all this open on one side to the Danube, save where the luxuriance of the ornamental and exotic timber forms an occasional screen; and framed in on the other by the hoary wall which concealed from curious eyes the fair wives of the magnificent Solyman when he was lord of Buda, and which still bears the impress of many an Austrian ball, perceptible even amid its decay.

Nor is this the only relic of the Turk in the Palatinate Gardens; for in a thickness of one of the walls still exists a flight of steps, leading down to the very edge of the river; by which hidden way it is supposed that numbers of Moslems

must have escaped, when the fortress (on whose site the present palace was built) was reconquered for the last time by the Christians.

On leaving the Palace we drove to the summit of the Blocksberg; this steep and rugged rock juts into the river immediately beyond the city, and rises jagged and sterile as though it meant to lift the Observatory which stands upon its summit, into the very clouds.

The view which it commands is beyond verbal description, nor can even the painter ever hope to do it justice—the old and the new cities lie below it, severed by the Danube; and before, and about, and beyond it, spread vale and mountain, forest and vineyard, plain and river, in rich and wide profusion. We saw the sun set, and the moon rise, ere we descended the mountain, which on its landward side is clothed with vines; and I do not believe that one of the party will ever again look upon a magnificent landscape without reverting to the rock of Buda.

This mighty mass, known to the Germans as the Blocksberg, is, however, called by the Hungarians *Sz Gellérthegye*, or the Mountain of St.

Gerard; for here, say their traditions, while Pannonia was yet a Pagan land, a certain St. Gerard, bent on its entire conversion, built a hermitage, and commenced his holy labour. They hated him, the legend goes on to state, for two distinct reasons; first, because he was a *German*, and secondly, because he interfered in a matter which was purely their own; and thus the work prospered so ill, that the zealous saint, whom no difficulties could discourage, after vainly trying to win the infidel conquerors by exhortations and promises, at length unfortunately armed himself with threats and menaces, whereupon the benighted warriors, who spurned at all attempt at coercion, hurled him headlong from the summit of the rock into the Danube; and in memory of this event a chapel was afterwards erected in the Ratz suburb in his honour.

Bonfin relates that an ancestor of the Koragi family was particularly active in the murder of St. Gerard, having himself assisted in the martyrdom; and that from that time none of his descendants prospered in any undertaking; and although among the bravest warriors of the land,

never dared to approach the Chapel of the Saint, as they were sure when they attempted to do so to be seized with violent tremblings and a total prostration of strength.

Some historians assert that Attila precipitated his brother Bleda into the Danube from the same spot; but this is at best apocryphal.

The Blocksberg was also celebrated during the middle ages for being haunted, on certain days, by witches, and other evil spirits: while, as if to counteract their malignant influence, the Ancient Hungarians gave the name of "The region of Happiness and Abundance" to the suburb of Taban, the belt of land which extends along its base.

It was near this spot that the Huns passed the Danube when they defeated the Roman Army.

CHAPTER VI.

M. DE DÖBRENTEI—THE CITY PRISON—PRISON-RULES —PRISON-PROTOCOL—CONDEMNED CELLS—WOMEN'S CELLS—THE VICTIM OF SUSPICION—ACCUSED CELLS —THE MURDERER.

DURING our residence at Pesth we made a delightful acquaintance in M. de Döbrentei, an Hungarian writer of eminence, whose kind and polite attention so greatly tended to enliven our sojourn in that city. I cannot perhaps introduce this gentleman better than in the words of Dr. Bowring in his "Magyar Biographical Sketches;" which I therefore subjoin.

"Döbrentei has translated several of Shakspeare's plays, and his Magyar Macbeth was represented at Poson during the sittings of the Diet in 1825. His epic *Kenyérmezei Diadal*, Victory of Kenyérmező, a sort of Ossianic composition, has been translated into German by Count

Mailáth. There is a charming popular tone about some of his productions, while others give evidence of a high and cultivated taste. His origin is noble—his birthplace Hógyész. His early productions obtained for him the favour of the Soprony Literary Society, whose Transactions he edited in 1804. After travel in foreign lands he became the preceptor of the young Count Gyulai, of Transylvania. He again left his country for Italy in 1814, and on his return established the *Erdélyi Museum* at Kolosvár, one of the most valuable contributions to Magyar literature.

"Men of every sect united to assist this interesting undertaking, and its pages will be found ornamented with the works of Catholics and Calvinists, Lutherans, and Unitarians.

"Ever labouring for the advance of his country's literature, he laid the foundations of a society of Belles Lettres on an extended scale, which has been sanctioned and recommended by many of the authorities, but has not yet obtained the patronage of the King. In 1825, he was made Commissary of the Buda district, and there is his place of abode. He is one of the most zealous,

one of the most enlightened and fascinating of the Magyar writers. He is the author of the article in the Leipzig *Conversations Lexicon* on the literature of his country, and his name will be found associated with honourable titles to distinction and affection over the whole field of Magyar intelligence.

"I owe much to Döbrentei, far more than my thanks can repay."

Such, in the words of one who knew him well, and could judge him rightly, was our new friend; nor did I ever ask a favour of him which he was not ready to grant. It was in the society of this gentleman that I visited the prisons of Pesth, of which I am about to give some details in my present chapter.

We commenced our melancholy task by a survey of the jail of the city, which contained only eighty-seven male, and thirteen female prisoners; a cheering fact as regarded the civic morals; but which, however, lost much of its force with me when I had been over the establishment; for the culprit must be either thoroughly hardened, or totally insensible, who ever subjects himself to a

second period of incarceration within its walls. The building is extensive, and every possibility of escape appears to have been carefully guarded against; but there all *care*, as regards the prisoners, seems to have ended; for if mere imprisonment can suffice to expiate crime anywhere, I think it must be in the prisons of Pesth.

Passing under a turreted gateway we found ourselves in a square yard, surrounded on all sides by an exterior gallery, whence opened the offices and apartments of the different functionaries; the cells of the culprits and the kitchen being situated beneath it. This yard is closed at the lower end, near the entrance, by a grating, beyond which none of the prisoners can pass, save those who at stated hours are permitted to assist in the public works, or even in cases of extreme good behaviour, to be employed by private individuals; the money so obtained being left at the disposal of the convict.

The diet of each prisoner is regulated by the nature of his crime, and the term of his sentence: save that for two days in the week, the whole of the prisoners, whatever may be their rank or means,

receive nothing but bread and water, and are not allowed to indulge in any other fare. With this exception, those who either earn money, or have friends to supply them, are permitted to purchase whatever they see fit to covet, without even excepting wine and tobacco.

In like manner, both their beds and their clothing vary according to circumstances, no prison-dress being provided; but each convict wearing the clothes he chanced to have on when apprehended; and being subsequently supplied with such garments as occasional deaths and other casualties place at the disposition of the authorities, should the term of his imprisonment require them to be renewed, and his own means not suffice to procure others.

Thus you distinguish at a glance the town-bred villain who has forced a lock, or picked a pocket, from the skulking and more stolid peasant who has "removed his neighbour's landmark," or "lifted" his neighbour's horse, even did not the difference of physiognomy at once identify them.

Each convict wears a double chain attached to the legs by a ring, and fastened in the centre to a

string about his waist, but no other bodily inconvenience is inflicted, the strength of the locks and the vigilance of the jailers being considered as sufficient securities against escape.

The principal turnkey left us for a moment to procure what he very diplomatically termed the "prison-protocol:" and then, accompanied by one of his subordinates, he proceeded to lay bare his kingdom of misery and vice. I was a little startled to see the words "Condemned Cell" written above the first door that he opened, and it was a relief to me when I learnt that they simply implied that the convicts within were expiating their sentence of imprisonment, and were already aware of its term.

Having crossed the narrow and uninviting threshold we found ourselves in the centre of the first of two cells opening one into the other, each being tolerably lighted from a square aperture, placed near the ceiling and strongly barred with iron; but totally inadequate to admit sufficient air to relieve the foul and fetid atmosphere, arising from the close contact of two-and-twenty wretched beings, filthy both in their persons and their cloth-

ing; and (save those among them who were employed occasionally in labour, and who thus escaped for a time from their nauseous captivity,) only suffered to leave the cells for one quarter of an hour daily, to exercise themselves in the small, damp, gloomy-looking yard without.

I never breathed such an atmosphere! For a few seconds my respiration was perfectly impeded, and my lungs laboured painfully: and then came the stench of rank tobacco, garlic, and all the combination of foul scents which may be supposed to meet in such a receptacle of recklessness and filth. Round the walls were ranged the raised boards forming the sleeping-places of the convicts; some few boasting a ragged mattress, others covered with the tattered garments which sufficed no longer for the personal use of their owners, and others again totally bare.

There was no shrinking from observation in the wretched beings by whom we were surrounded —no repentant crime crouching into the dark shadows of the cell to escape the gaze of strangers —all were either beneath or beyond the touch of shame; and they stood boldly forward, curious

and amused, as though they were not themselves alike the objects of our pity and our loathing. It is strange, and sad, and startling to *reflect*, but it is a hundredfold more bitter and more humiliating to *witness*, to what a pitch human nature may be debased; and I never felt it more painfully than on this occasion, when the head turnkey having opened his protocol, desired each convict to stand forward while he read aloud to us his name, his crime, and his sentence; a ceremony which appeared to me as so unnecessarily cruel that I entreated it might be dispensed with; a request which was received with surprise by the functionary, and created evident amusement among the prisoners.

Nor shall I readily forget the jocose eagerness of one of the miserable men, who, on its being stated to us that he was suffering an imprisonment of eight years for having stolen the sum of thirty thousand florins from a dwelling-house, pressed forward with a smile upon his lips to desire that the chronicler of his crime would not fail also to explain, that although he was expiating his sentence, the money had been recovered

and restored to its rightful owner; an arrangement which he evidently considered as a personal injustice.

On quitting this cell, we declined visiting others of the same description, the one being a transcript of the whole; and therefore went at once to the prison of the women, where all the thirteen were confined together, without reference to the degree or nature of their crime; an arrangement still more to be deplored than the want of cleanliness and order which could affect only the bodily comfort of the convicts; this ill-advised mixture of age and vice, with youth and error, striking far deeper, and injuring beyond redemption the *morale* of many erring but not hardened delinquents, who must from such contact learn a lesson of depravity tending to colour all their after lives.

As the bolts were drawn back, and the heavy key turned hoarsely in the ponderous lock, all the miserable women crowded towards the door of the cell. Some looked stolid, reckless, and even amused; a few were decently clad, and scarcely seemed to have suffered from their incarceration; and others again were half-naked, filthy, and dis-

eased. My attention was drawn to one woman who had evidently been handsome, but on whom the tooth of famine and the touch of care had both evidently fastened. There was that unnatural brightness in her eye which betokens consumption, and her hands which were folded upon her bosom were white and wasted. The turnkey observed my look of interest, and at once turned to her with the question:

"What is your name? and what are you in for?"

"I am ——;" was the calm and unshrinking reply; "and I am in for nine years for murdering my child:" and her wasted lips closed again over her large white teeth without a single symptom of emotion.

Shall I not be believed when I declare that it was more terrible to look upon this utter and unnatural insensibility than to have witnessed the most impassioned grief?

Among this crowd of unfortunates there was one, however, who crouched down as if to avoid observation; her eyes were swollen, evidently from long and continued weeping, and there was a despair in her look and attitude which at once

distinguished her from her miserable companions, and excited alike curiosity and interest. Her history was soon told; but as she listened to the cold voice in which it was narrated, even though it was worded kindly, the tears burst forth again, and her deep painful sobs were suffocating.

"God help her, poor girl;" said the jailer: "she knows best whether she ought to be here. She was servant to a family in the town, when her mistress lost a ring, which she was suspected to have stolen; and she is sent here in the hope that she will confess, and tell where it may be found; but she does nothing but fret; and though she has been confined a good while now, she declares that she knows nothing of the ring, just as she did the first day."

Was not this dreadful? The wretch who had committed infanticide—the hardened thief, who with one child in her arms, and another at her knee, had ruthlessly plied her dishonest trade, and blighted their young eyes with vice just as they were opening upon life—were here, pent into one narrow cell with the weeping, heart-struck, shrinking victim of suspicion! As I

looked at the poor girl, I felt as though I could have torn the rings from my own fingers, and flung them among the filth of the jail-yard, in disgust that such idle toys could subject a fellow-being to this extremity of misery.

So far all was bad—bad both in feeling and in system; so bad that the punishment of the culprits looked rather like vengeance than justice, although it evidently owed its existence merely to that excessive tardiness in reform which has so paralyzed this fine country in all its relations: but I regret to say that this was not the worst; for to our astonishment we discovered on visiting the "Accused Cells," that is, the prisons of culprits under accusation, whose trials had not yet taken place, that they, although they might, until found guilty, have been supposed to profit by the doubt, and consequently to enjoy a nearer approach to comfort than the declared and convicted culprits, were, under every point of view, considerably greater sufferers, not being indulged with a ray of light, or permitted to leave their loathsome prisons, even for the poor quarter of an hour daily, conceded to the declared convicts.

I enquired the reason of this arrangement, and was told that it was "the law of the prison," beyond which, the turnkey very professionally appeared to think that there could be no appeal. As we followed the lamps of our conductors from one of these cells to another, my heart sank within me, and I was about to decline proceeding further along the gallery upon which they opened, when I was attracted by the appearance of a Sclavonian peasant, evidently not more than twenty years of age, whose emaciated frame was covered by his *bunda*, which was fastened about his throat by a wooden skewer, and fell nearly to his feet. I never saw anything alive so livid and so fleshless; and the long uncombed locks of dark hair that clustered round his withered face, and half screened his large and sunken eyes, added to his cadaverous appearance.

The cell contained three individuals: the young peasant whom I have just described; a stout middle-aged countryman under accusation of theft; and a smart, handsome, well-dressed man who seemed to have been shut in by mistake, for there was a merry smile upon his lip that

mocked at the idea of imprisonment and suffering. The contrast between the captives was so striking that I could not refrain from asking their history. The peasant was under sentence of death for murder; but as some hope existed that he might be reprieved, he had been placed in an "accused cell" until his fate was decided; and the smiling delinquent at his side, who elbowed him during the day, if that could indeed be called *day* which brought no light to them—and slept beside him at night—his companion, his associate, and his friend—for surely the heart must assert itself, and cling to something even in wretchedness like this—was an artisan of the city, accused of unfair play in a wine-house, where he was stated to have cheated a comrade of a couple of florins!

The fact was monstrous: and as I walked away I could not help marvelling to myself whether the murderer had ever beguiled the darkness, by painting to his companions the scene of blood in which he had been an actor; and thus teaching them that they were as yet but young in crime, and that there were other and lower depths

to which human nature could descend in order to indulge its vicious appetites.

There is no calculating on the effects of such contact either upon the minds of the gambler and the thief, or upon society at large, when, their crimes expiated by temporary imprisonment, they are again thrust back into the crowd. Doubtless the weeks passed in that dark cell have not tended to make them either better men, or greater penitents.

We are shortly to visit the County prison; and after my experience of to-day, I confess that I look forward to our purpose almost with dread; and the rather, that as a new jail is about to be erected on the principle of those of America, the authorities having decided that the present building is insufficient in size, and defective in its internal arrangements, we cannot hope to find it at all superior to that which we have just seen. God grant that the city may follow the example of the county, for it is misery even to remember that such a receptacle of wretchedness exists.

CHAPTER VII.

IMPERIAL SUMMONS—THE ARCHDUCAL FAMILY—THE DEAD PRINCE—THE ARCHDUKE STEPHEN—THE MUNICIPAL PRISON—JAIL-YARD—AN ESCAPE—CAPTURE—FETID ATMOSPHERE—WOMEN'S CELLS—THE JEWESS—PRISON PAUPERS—PREVALENCE OF INFANTICIDE IN HUNGARY—THE MOTHER—THE MURDERESS—CAUSES OF INFANTICIDE—THE TRIAL.

JUST as I had one morning seated myself at my desk, I was honoured by a command to wait upon the Princess-Palatine in her private apartments, where I was most kindly and graciously received by Her Imperial Highness, who introduced me to her children. The young Archduchess Elizabeth, who is about eight years of age, is tall and graceful, and promises to be a perfect beauty: the Archduke Joseph is a fine boy, full of life and energy; and the sweet little Princess Maria Henrietta is as lovely a fairy as eye can look upon.

Nothing can be more unpretending than the *entourage* of Her Imperial Highness. The suite of rooms which she occupies are numerous but not spacious; and are more *English* in their arrangement than any I have yet seen in the country. Family portraits cover the walls, and writing, drawing, and work-tables are to be seen in every direction, evidently placed there rather for use than ornament. A few good paintings, all on sacred subjects, dispersed among the portraits, are conspicuous in the apartment which the Archduchess commonly occupies, but no attempt at pomp or parade of any description can be anywhere detected.

Opposite to the sofa on which we sat hung a portrait the size of life, of Her Imperial Highness's first-born son, the Archduke Alexander Leopold; a young prince of such extraordinary promise both moral and physical that I have heard him designated both the "hope of Hungary," and the "lion of the house of Hapsbourg." Judging from the painting, he must have been remarkably handsome—must have been, I say, for this beloved son expired in 1837 in his

twelfth year, and in the full burst of his noble intellect.

The Archduchess told me the tale herself—lingered fondly over every detail of his sickness—painted his calm and holy death, in such words as a mother only could have found in which to paint them; and although my own tears flowed freely, her cheek was dry, and her voice never faltered. He had been her hope, her idol, the one dream of her existence; and yet no one had ever seen her weep. She wiped the death-chill from his forehead—she received his last breath on her bosom—she sat beside his body until it was shrouded for the grave—and ultimately she followed it there, without a murmur or a tear. She appeared to be solaced by my emotion, but she did not share it; and when she had told me that she yet possessed her boy, for that he lay in a vault beneath the palace, she took my hand, and led me into an adjoining apartment, where, resting upon an easel, and projecting far into the room, she directed my attention to a magnificent oil painting, in which the young prince is represented ascending from the tomb in the arms of an angel.

The whole composition is masterly. The lid of the sarcophagus is removed, and amid the folds of the pall which is falling from it, lie a page of music, a scroll of algebraic figures, and the escutcheon of the House of Hapsbourg, to typify his removal from the studies and the greatness to which he was destined. The angel is of the last beauty; and the inspired countenance of the child, and the energy with which he presses the crucifix to his young and innocent bosom, as he glances upward to the Heaven that is awaiting him, are so affecting that I almost wondered how the eye of a mother could venture to look upon them.

But the calm and beautiful resignation of the Archduchess found food for increase even in this contemplation; and I felt rebuked as she said to me, almost with a smile: "Is it not consoling—Is it not delightful to look upon that picture? I sometimes sit for hours before it, figuring to myself the happiness of my darling son. This glorious painting was a present from the Empress-Mother, and you will readily believe that she could not have made me one more welcome."

After relating this little incident, I feel that any panegyric which I could offer of this high-hearted lady would be mere supererogation. But the extent of her truly Christian resignation will be better understood when I add that every individual with whom I have ever spoken on the subject of the young Prince, has been loud in his praise.

When the Princess Maria Dorothea of Würtemburg became the wife of the Palatine of Hungary, she at once entered upon what she considered to be her duty to her adopted country, by studying its language; a task whose difficulty can only be appreciated by those who have made a similar attempt; but the Archduchess felt that it *was* her duty, and therefore she persisted until she had attained it; and scarcely had the young Archduke Alexander learnt to lisp her name, ere, to use her own words, she resolved that he should become "an Hungarian Prince, able to comprehend and to sympathise with the feelings of the people;" and she placed near him as his body servant a non-commissioned officer of Hungarian dragoons, of high character, speaking no language but his own, who became his playfellow as well as his attend-

ant; and from whom he learnt unconsciously a difficult tongue from his very infancy; as well as those high notions of military honour which seemed to be congenial to his character.

Beautiful in person, apt in intellect, and eager to comprehend and to applaud all that was noble and chivalric, the young Prince was regarded by the Hungarian nation as a bright and glorious promise for the future; and thus the bereaved mother mourned not alone when that hope was blighted; the tears of a whole people embalmed his bier—his memory lives in their hearts.

But I am growing melancholy; and I must not forget that there is another fair son, if not the first, now at least the only one, who may yet live to supply his place; and that the Archduke Stephen, the twin-brother of the Princess Hermine, is also justly dear to the Hungarian nation, speaking their language, and entering into their feelings.

I need not say that my visit to the Palace was one of intense interest. I remained there above two hours, and when the Archduchess em-

braced me tenderly on parting, I felt that I had learnt a lesson never to be forgotten.

The transition was a strange one for which I had to prepare myself; for I had only one short hour left in which to snatch a hasty meal, and to change my dress, in order to visit the County Jail; nor am I ashamed to confess that as I sat beside Her Imperial Highness, the remembrance of the prison which I had traversed so recently rose more than once, like the skeleton of the ancient Egyptian banquets, before my mental vision, and that I sickened at the retrospect. I had passed from the prison to the palace, and now from the palace I was about to retrace my steps to the prison.

As we turned from the street to enter a square court, nearly surrounded by half-finished buildings of very respectable promise, I at once concluded that these were to form the new prison, and was truly sorry to be undeceived by the information that they were the Municipal Offices; and that the bayed edifice fronting me was the Council Hall, where the elections are held, and other

county business transacted; of the jail itself, not a stone is yet laid.

We were introduced, on our arrival, to the Comptroller of the prison, a gentlemanly person of remarkably quiet address, who insisted on accompanying us over the building, and we at once commenced our survey.

Passing behind the Hall, we entered through a deep archway a dark and narrow passage, whence a second branched off, whose heavily-grated door was guarded by a military sentinel; and having crossed this, which was hastily closed behind us, we stood in the first section of the prison. On our left hand was the court-yard, in which all the convicts are allowed one hour's recreation each day, save those who are under sentence of solitary confinement, or in whose peculiar case there is some aggravated fact which places them beyond the pale of indulgence. The yard is enclosed by the walls of the jail and adjacent houses, which are nowhere less than fifteen or sixteen feet in height. It is about thirty feet square, deep in mud, and having a pump in the centre with an iron drinking-cup chained to it, for the use of the

convicts, who when they meet in the court are not allowed to converse. There were about a dozen standing or walking there when we entered, all as filthy and as wretched-looking as can be imagined.

On leaving this place of *recreation*, we entered the lower prison-passage, all the cells being opened for us as we proceeded; and here we only witnessed the misery and degradation of the city jail upon a much larger scale; seven hundred convicts being already confined here, and eighty more expected immediately.

The atmosphere was dense with filth, the pavement under our feet slippery with mud, and the whole place crowded with soldiers, whose extreme cleanliness looked strangely out of keeping with everything about them.

The reason of this strong military guard was explained to us by the Comptroller, who conducted us to a cell, whence two convicts had contrived to escape the previous night; but how they had effected it still continued as great a mystery to the prison authorities as it was to us.

Every cell has two doors, the inner one being a solid plate of iron, traversed by an external bar,

having at each extremity a huge padlock, of which the principal jailer keeps the keys; and outside this a second, formed of a strong lattice-work of iron bars, secured like the first, each of the four padlocks having a separate key. The cell contained eleven prisoners, two of whom had by some means opened all these locks; and then, on reaching the gallery, proceeded to pick those of an opening communicating with the prison-stove, whence they ascended the chimney, and gained the roof of the building; but by the time that they arrived there the night was spent, and the growing light betrayed them to the guard, by whom, after a desperate resistance, they were re-captured; and it was under the idea that they might have communicated their secret to others who would in their turn endeavour to profit by it, that an increased body of military had been called in to the assistance of the prison functionaries.

I will not linger unnecessarily on the painful subject of this foul and fetid place of confinement; on the impure air, the dim dreariness, the constant rattling of the chains on the limbs of the convicts, and the general aspect of despair and

desolation; but at once proceed to mention the women's jail, which is situated on the second floor, and separated from that of the men by a pair of iron gates, guarded by a military sentinel. The passage through this screen failed, however, to afford any relief to the feelings; for I am compelled to declare that the hundred miserable wretches by whom it was tenanted, were, if possible, more filthy, more lost, and more degraded than the men.

On entering the first cell, I absolutely staggered; and I was some seconds before I could distinguish objects—but when at length I did so, what a scene I looked upon! On one settle lay a woman, burnt up with fever, and gasping with thirst; her cap was lying on the floor beside her, and her long matted hair was scattered over her bosom. "She is very ill," said one of the jailers, who observed that I was looking towards her; "she will probably die."

"Yes;" said a deep voice close beside me, echoing his words as coldly as he had uttered them, "she will probably die."

I turned towards the speaker, and I shall never

forget my astonishment at her appearance. She was a Jewess, and one of the most beautiful women I ever saw in my life—a perfect embodiment of Scott's Rebecca—her eyes were dark and luminous; her black hair fell in large glossy ringlets over her shoulders, and was bound back from her brow with a bright-coloured handkerchief. She wore a loose jacket with hanging sleeves after the oriental fashion, and a shawl about her waist; and, altogether, her apparition was so extraordinary that I started as I looked at her. She had been imprisoned only a day, and her crime was infanticide! the mother of eighteen had dyed her hands in the blood of her own infant, and she had been tearless, and apparently reckless ever since.

On her knees in the centre of the floor was a woman washing linen; and huddled together in groups were mothers with their half-naked children, squalid, haggard, and peevish; and grey old women with wrinkled foreheads and fleshless cheeks, whose years and weakness should have known only comfort and indulgence. In short it was a sink of wretchedness! And they begged

with such earnestness—and received our alms with such eagerness—that it was painful to reflect on the degradation of human nature, which, even amid such an existence as this, will still assert itself.

I was greatly shocked to find that four-sixths of the women there in confinement had been guilty of infanticide, a crime which is frightfully prevalent throughout the country; the remainder being principally under conviction for petty thefts. Thus, in the next cell that we visited, my attention was attracted by an emaciated creature, who sat on the floor upon a ragged blanket, with one naked child upon her knee, and a second partially covered with an old shawl beside her. She had stolen a couple of loaves from a shop in the city; "Yes, yes, I stole them;" she said to me, as the jailer explained her crime; "I stole them because these poor children were starving—poor things!" and she put her thin arms about them both: "they had no father to feed them—only me, and I had no bread." And her head drooped over the wretched little beings in such utter de-

spair, that it was impossible to restrain one's tears.

She took the money that I put into her hand without a word; but she looked first at me, and then at her children, with such an amazed and overjoyed expression as could never have been framed into speech: it was evident that she was thinking only of them, and of the happiness that these poor coins would procure for them; and it made me heart-sick to remember that this loving and devoted creature, who had not only striven but even sinned to preserve her little ones, was condemned to the incessant and hateful contact of the lost creatures who had been rendered childless by their own guilty hands.

As I traversed the narrow cell on my return from beside her, I passed near a settle covered with a coarse mat, upon which a stool and some cooking utensils had been flung. "Fear nothing, Madame;" said one of our conductors, who imagined that he saw me recoil; "there is nothing there. I had it removed as you entered the prison, lest it might startle you."

Had *what* removed? Had my life depended upon it, I could not have forborne the question.

It was the body of a woman whose conscience had anticipated the executioner—the murderer of her husband,—who had expired a few hours previously in that loathsome place, in all the agonies of a too-tardy repentance. The tale harrowed me; and I turned hastily to leave the cell, when in so doing I ran against a woman who was standing on the threshold, breathing the comparatively free air of the gallery, and she too was under sentence for child-murder!

I was naturally anxious to ascertain the probable cause of the great prevalence of this particular crime, in a country where the extraordinary tenderness of parents for their children is everywhere manifest; and I requested one of the municipal Judges with whom I was acquainted, to explain to me his impression on the subject.

By him the cause was stated to be twofold—poverty, and shame. In the first case, no law enforcing the support of the infant by the father, and the mother being unable to maintain it, its destruction appeared to be generally rather an act

of desperation than of volition; and deferred for months, probably in the hope that some accidental good fortune might enable her to provide for its necessities—a fact which bore painfully upon our new poor-laws in England—whereas, in the other phase of the crime, the act was committed immediately—in the first agony of maternity—when the bodily and mental suffering of the parent combined to overwhelm her with a terror which absorbed all dread of ultimate discovery.

As he spoke, I shuddered! Let the happy wife and mother imagine the dreadful moments of suspense in which hope and fear must have alternated in maddening succession for the poor wretched victim of deception and disgrace, who looked upon her infant with the fond yearning of maternal love. How she must have remembered her first moments of confiding affection—her first hours of doubt!—how shrunk before the dreadful dread of desertion—the frightful certainty of her ruin, the famine which yawned around her helpless babe, and finally the untimely grave to which her own hands had consigned it!

It is a terrible picture! And it is awful to learn

that it is by no means an uncommon one. The gentleman to whom I had addressed myself on this occasion, told me that he was once much affected, when on the bench, at the trial of a beautiful young girl of seventeen, not for the murder, but for the concealment of her infant after its birth. She was supported into the hall, with her head drooping upon her bosom, and her pale lips quivering with agony. She did not even glance around her, as she was led forward, but moved on mechanically, as though she had no interest in the passing scene. She was so young, so lovely, and so helpless, that the trial went on rather in mercy than in justice; but the facts were too palpable, and her weeping mother was the last and fullest evidence against her.

As she was declared guilty, her nature appeared suddenly changed—her pale cheek became flooded with crimson, and she swept away the hair from her brow, and looked long and steadily around her. She folded her arms about her mother's neck, and spoke: her voice did not falter for an instant, and although it was low and faint, she articulated every word calmly and distinctly.

She had been wrong, she said, very wrong, to waste the time of worthy gentlemen, who had better occupation than that of hearing tales of crime and folly. She should have told the truth at once; and by so doing have spared both them and herself. But it was hard, very hard, to stand among a crowd, and to declare yourself the victim of deception, and the mark of scorn. And then she spread out her wasted hands, and extended them towards her judges; and the large tears rained from her eyes as she declared that they had never come in contact with her infant save in tenderness; and that had it lived, she thought she could have braved the contumely of the world, and loved even her disgrace, for the sake of the helpless being to whom she had given life. But when she saw it lying before her cold, and stiff, and lifeless, a pang of shame seized upon her heart; she remembered her mother, her brothers, all the friends of her youth, and she grew mad as quick and busy thoughts rose upon her brain—and so she folded her dead infant in her shawl—and dug its grave—and became the miserable wretch they saw her now. And oh! that shame

—that shame—by which she was cut off from all she had ever loved—scorned by her fondest friends—spurned by those who had sought her most—those only who had felt that shame could tell how desperate it made the guilty ones on whom it fell! She asked for no mercy—she deserved none. It had been thought kind to tell her that her life was safe—she knew not if it was true—she cared not. She hoped that the gentlemen would do their duty as thoroughly as she had forgotten hers.

And this was a peasant-girl, in a country where you are not led to expect natural refinement; and yet, how fully did her woman-nature assert itself! She could not bear the shame!

Poor thing! My readers may wish to hear the conclusion of her story as much as I did; and it is soon told. She was condemned to three months' solitary confinement—and it was done in mercy, that the contact of coarser and guiltier spirits might not place her beyond the pale of future respectability—but the iron had entered her heart, and she died before the term of her imprisonment had expired.

Where was the scaffold high enough on which to hang the destroyer of such a creature as Heaven had destined this poor girl to be? Had it been that of Haman it must have failed!

But to return to the prison. I had been told that there were subterranean cells beneath the galleries through which I had been conducted; but they were not even alluded to by the Comptroller, and I have every reason to believe do not exist.

It will probably be thought, that on leaving the women's jail I had seen wretchedness enough, and should desire nothing so much as to escape at once into the pure air of Heaven. But it was not so. I had still another object to accomplish in this visit in which I had not yet succeeded, and which remains to be explained.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARIA THERESA — CAPTAIN BELEZNAY — RAPID ADVANCEMENT—THE BAVARIAN CAMPAIGN—THE MALEDICTION—COUNT SAMUEL BELEZNAY—THE MARRIAGE—THE PEASANT-COUNTESS—THE INTERVIEW—THE FIRST-BORN—THE SHOOTING-PARTY—THE VICTIM—THE PARRICIDE—THE EXECUTION—THE MODERN JUDITH—THE SACRILEGE—THE MOTHER—THE FRATRICIDE—THE CAPTURE—THE LAW OF THE HOUR—COUNT FRANCIS BELEZNAY—THE "EXPOSURE"—POPULAR EXECRATION—THE TRIAL—THE APPEAL—THE COMMUTATION—MY PROJECT—THE VISITATION—THE CULPRIT—THE PRISON-CELL—PRISON-FOPPERY—VINDICTIVENESS—THE PRINCESS-PALATINE.

In the reign of the glorious Maria Theresa—her husband's shade must pardon me, but I have learnt of both Hungarians and Germans, to think of him only as her husband—there served in the Austrian army a certain Captain Beleznay, of ancient family, but small means, who by his great

bravery drew upon himself the eye of the Empress.

Once remarked by Maria Theresa his fortune was made. He rose rapidly through the ranks of his profession, was created Count, enriched, enabled to redeem the fallen fortunes of his race, and ultimately as a general officer sent on a campaign against the Turks; where his valour was so great as to overwhelm him, from the hands of a grateful and chivalrous sovereign, with new honours and additional trust.

Hitherto, General Count Beleznay had fought only against the Infidels: had met craft with craft, and blood with blood—his next expedition was in Bavaria, and there again he fought like a lion—bled for his country, and reaped fresh laurels. But rumours began to grow that he loved carnage for its own sake; that he was ruthless—reckless—making merry with the sufferings of his kind, and cruel where he might have spared. He rioted in his success—his heart battened on gore—his festival was blood! His star was, however, in the ascendent; and none dared openly assert what all avouched in secret; but the deep conviction of

the many will be best understood by the fact that even to this day a prayer is said to have been introduced into the church-service of Bavaria, beseeching that evil might fall upon him and upon his descendants, in vengeance for the wrong which he wrought in that devoted country.

Alas! it has been fearfully answered.

This brave but bad man had a brother, whose fortunes he retrieved when his own became flourishing. The Count Samuel Beleznay was a landholder, and he increased his possessions until he became rich and powerful in his province—he had vineyards, and fields of Indian corn, and droves of oxen, and flocks of sheep; and having become wealthy, he determined to marry; but for this purpose he sought not the neighbouring nobles whose daughters would have been his fitting wives; but resolved to espouse the beautiful child of one of his vinegrowers, whom he had long loved, but whose virtue had withstood his wiles.

The unfortunate girl was not proof against such a flattering prospect; and amid the sneers of the haughty, and it may be disappointed, aristocracy,

and the wonder of her own class, she was ere long the bride of the Count Samuel Beleznay.

Some months subsequently the peasant-countess was about to become a mother, and dark passions began to work in the bosom of her husband. When, bowed by pain and weakness, she was no longer able to leave her bed, he entered the chamber, and bade the attendants leave him for a time alone with his suffering wife. He was obeyed; and while the hand of the grateful woman was outstretched to him, in acknowledgment of this unlooked-for kindness, the Count approached her with a stern brow, and drawing a pistol from his bosom, swore to her by all his hopes in life that if she did not bear him a son, his next visit to her chamber should be to shoot her as she lay; and having accomplished his demoniac errand, he turned away, and left her.

Horror and anguish seized the miserable wife; and amid tears and terror, her first-born saw the light:—but she was saved at least from a death of blood, for it was a son; and none knew, when the ferocious father congratulated her on the event,

how fearfully she would have expiated the birth of a daughter.

In due course of time she became the mother of three more boys; but the elder, the young Count Samuel, was the idol of his father's heart.

The brothers grew up, strong, wilful, untaught young savages, believing that all around and beneath them was made for their sole enjoyment; and were verging fast on manhood, when it chanced that one day, the father, accompanied by his sons, started on a shooting expedition in the middle of winter to kill wild-ducks.

Their post was beside a wide lake, partially frozen, and the sport went well for a time, until the Count fired and a bird fell at a great distance from the shore, when he whistled to one of his gamekeepers as though he had been a dog, and with the same words and gesticulation urged him to take the water, and secure the game.

The man, too conscious of the humour of his master, attempted to obey. He flung off his *bunda*, and plunged into the half-frozen water; he was young and vigorous; and for a time, he made head bravely against the heavy chill of the lake; but

human nature could not hold out beyond a given point; and then terror overtook him, and he sought to regain the shore.

The ruthless noble marked his retrogression: "Wretch!" he exclaimed; "Is it thus that I am obeyed?" And as the suffering peasant struggled to reach the land, he discharged his rifle, and the surface of the lake became red with blood.

The curse had commenced; and he had himself given to his sons their first lesson in crime!

But a deeper tragedy than this was ere long to be written in the annals of this devoted race. The young Count Samuel, the child of threatening—the son on whom his soul was fixed, and whose birth he had tainted by a dream of blood,—grew up less wild and wilful than the first-born of such a sire may be supposed to do, and had attained to manhood; when one fatal day a war of words commenced between the father and the son, as was too much their wont; which only grew louder and more loud when on ordinary occasions it would have been appeased; and at length the wretched parent, after setting his child the example of crime, rebuked the proud spirit

that defied him—taunted the demon that he himself had raised, and ultimately threatened the young man with a horsewhipping at the hands of his most menial servants if he did not bend to his will. This menace only strengthened the opposition of the youth; who bade his tyrant-father pause ere he attempted to disgrace him by such an indignity, as with his blood roused, and his passions excited as they then were, he could not answer for the consequences.

The old Count laughed scornfully as he listened, and then turning upon his heel with a contemptuous gesture quitted the apartment. But he left it only to return; and when he again appeared he was no longer alone, for behind him stood two of the peasant-grooms who were the usual instruments of his brutal will.

Whether he really contemplated visiting upon his son the insult which he had named, could never be ascertained; for shouts and imprecations alone were heard to issue from that fated chamber, and amid the storm which ensued, the young Count snatched up his rifle, and shot the miserable old man to the heart!

The curse worked indeed—

Against this unnatural crime, Heaven itself cried aloud for vengeance; and mercy could not even be contemplated. Samuel Beleznay perished on a scaffold; the nobility of his birth saving him indeed from the cord, and his head being struck off by the public executioner.

The parricide was one of the handsomest men in the country; and although the very name of Beleznay might well have been enough to turn every woman-heart sick when it was heard, he had been loved. Many will be startled at the sequel of my tale as much as they have doubtlessly been harrowed by its commencement; but they shall hear it all.

The wretched woman who loved him had been won by the beauty of his person—it was passion rather than affection which bound her to him; and when his fate was decided, and that she found there was no longer any ground for hope, her whole anxiety centred in the desire to possess a cast of the face which had so long filled her fancy. To do this before his execution was impossible, as no one was permitted to see him; and the only

loathsome alternative was to obtain it after his head had fallen upon the scaffold. But her longing, like that of Judith, was not to be appeased: she forgot the shame, the agony, the dishonour, even the blood which beckoned her back: and she persisted.

It is strange that in cases like these some unlooked-for facility ever presents itself; and so it proved with the unnatural betrothed of Beleznay. She was loved also by a Magnate whose body-servant had studied under a sculptor, and understood the whole mechanism of casting; and who anxious to gain her favour at any price, volunteered this man's services, which were at once accepted; and the twilight had scarcely fallen on the day that witnessed the execution of the parricide, when the Noble presented himself to the blood-stained official, to prefer his extraordinary request.

Even the accustomed minister of death, initiated as he was into all its awful circumstances, shrank from the savage proposal; and urged that the mother of the culprit—the wretched mother, widowed by his parricidal hand—was to come at midnight to bear away the body; but the Baron answered

his scruples with assurances that long ere that time the head should be restored; when the man, unaccustomed to contend with his superiors, at length complied; and the noble carried off his prize.

The murderer wore a dark and bushy beard, of which he was inordinately vain: and thus, when the operator sought to obtain a cast of his features, he was twice balked by the hair which penetrated the plaster, and rendered his efforts abortive. He dreaded the resentment of his lord should he fail; and having overcome his first horror of the bloody work, he became less scrupulous, and actually shaved the dissevered head in order to ensure success.

This done, he became enamoured of his task, and took a second cast, and a third; forgetting that time meanwhile went on, until the hour of midnight was tolled from the belfries of the city; when hastily concealing the dishonoured remnant of humanity beneath his cloak, he hastened to restore it to the executioner. But the heart-struck mother had been there before him—under cover of the darkness she had come with a yearning heart

to secure to her guilty child the decency of a grave; and she had found only his body.

The subject is too revolting to be pursued. She departed at length with the remains of the guilty one: but not before the horrible conviction reached her that even after death he had been made the loathsome toy of a passionate and heartless woman.

I have stated that the murdered Count Beleznay had five sons. A quarrel grew between two of them, Charles and Francis, relatively to some property to which each advanced a claim. The younger, Count Francis, had a wife of noble family, whose ambition was equal to his own; and where in her woman-duty she should have soothed and softened, she only urged and maddened. It is difficult to believe what followed —a deep and deadly hate grew upon him towards his brother; he forgot that they had rested on the same bosom, and slept in the same arms; and with his pistols in his hand he repaired to his dwelling.

Charles was sitting in seeming security, without a dream of danger, when Francis passed the

threshold of his chamber; his wife was beside him, and a friend whom he loved stood near him at the moment. The assassin gave one long look around, and fired; but the wife had read murder in his eye even in that passing moment; and she flung herself before her husband just in time to receive the charge in her bosom, and to fall seriously wounded to the earth.

A second pistol was aimed; and the friend sprang towards the murderer to arrest the fire; but he only rushed upon his own fate—the weapon was discharged into his heart; and a third shot reached the elder Beleznay, but not mortally, ere the assassin fled.

The report of fire-arms had alarmed the neighbourhood, and the hurried and perturbed retreat of the murderer at once betrayed his guilt. He was pursued and taken on the river-quay, under the windows of the National Cassino, on his way to his own house.

I have a friend who witnessed his seizure, and who assured me that his efforts to fling off his captors were almost superhuman; but they were unsuccessful, and he was dragged to the city-prison.

There is a singular law in this country, that any criminal taken *flagrante delicto*, before he has gained the shelter of a roof, can be immediately executed. This is indifferently called *röytöntörvény*, or the law of the hour, and *standrecht*, summary law; but should he succeed in entering a dwelling, it becomes a sanctuary entitling him to a regular trial, and thus giving him the benefit of a delay which may be employed by his friends in his favour.

Count Francis Beleznay had failed in accomplishing this object; and the Vice-Count of the province, horror-stricken at the murder which he had committed, and the fratricide that he had contemplated, as well as justly indignant at the dishonour brought upon the nobility by his means, at once proposed his immediate execution; but he had powerful friends, and the father of his wife held an office under the Government; and thus it was resolved that the decision of the court should be obtained before any extreme penalty was inflicted upon the culprit.

The voice of the people was loud against him.

for they felt that although he was noble, he had been a shedder of blood; and that his rank should be no exemption from punishment. No feeling pleaded for him, for his family had trampled under foot the dearest and the holiest ties; and he had himself wilfully riven asunder the bond which had linked him to his fellow-men.

During the interval which was to decide his fate, the proud and vindictive man suffered, however, a preliminary justice which must, to such a nature as his, have been more bitter than a thousand deaths. He was what is here termed "Exposed" in the court of the county-prison; that is, he was compelled to stand there during three days, with his arms pinioned, and surrounded by a military guard, to support the gaze and execrations of the populace.

The weather chanced to be dreadful; the rain descended in torrents; but all thought of personal inconvenience seemed to have been cast aside by the indignant and horror-stricken people; and it is said that scarcely a single soul either in the sister-cities or the neighbouring country, whatever

were their rank or sex, failed to look or to express their hate, both of the crime and its dark author, during those three frightful days.

Beleznay was in the prime of life and strength; and his tiger-heart, which had thirsted for blood, almost burst under this public exposure. He writhed in his bonds until it seemed as though their strong links must yield beneath his giant efforts. He gnashed his teeth until the blood gushed from between his fevered lips; and then, when exhausted nature could contend no longer, his head fell upon his breast, his cheek and forehead became blanched, and he tottered as he stood like a weak child whose limbs will scarcely bear it up. And thus through those terrible hours he alternated between fury and despair; the mark of horror, execration, and infamy.

The interest made for the miserable man was successful in obtaining for him the benefit of a formal and regular trial; but during its progress he was debarred from all intercourse with his family; and his wife employed the interval in obtaining an audience of the Archduke-Palatine; who, despite his well-known kindness of heart,

received her very reluctantly, on account of the aggravated nature of her husband's crime.

But the wretched woman would not be denied; and having accomplished her object, she flung herself at his feet, and with all the eloquence of agony, besought him to save the culprit's life. She wept—she implored—she appealed to his mercy as a husband and a father; and the amiable Prince, harrowed by the spectacle of her despair, at length consented to use his influence with the Judges.

It was of course successful—the murderer was permitted to live on; and his sentence was commuted to solitary confinement for fifteen years in the county prison.

Five of these dreary years have already expired, and he is now allowed to walk for an hour each day in the jail-yard alone, and occasionally to see his wife and children; or, in the event of any indisposition, his physician. He is also indulged with books and writing materials, but makes little use of either.

It will now be readily understood that one of my objects in visiting the prison was to obtain

a sight of this extraordinary criminal; but it was not until the Comptroller was preparing most politely to escort me to the gate, that I ventured to proffer my request.

Without a moment's hesitation he told me that it was impossible; that no one was allowed to see him, as he was a species of State prisoner; and that, reluctant as he was to disappoint me, he could not gratify my wish. But I had, even in my short life, been so accustomed to hear things quoted as impossibilities, which were nevertheless subsequently accomplished, that I was by no means discouraged; and in this instance I ultimately succeeded.

One of the friends by whom I was accompanied suggested that at a given hour after sunset a detachment of military made the tour of the cells before they were secured for the night, in order to ascertain that no attempts at escape had been made by the captives; and the period of this "visitation," as it is termed, was now close at hand. He was good enough, therefore, to propose to the Comptroller that I should be permitted to accompany them when they proceeded to the cell

of Beleznay, and, after some demur, he consented; when once having done so, he good-naturedly offered to enter and converse with the prisoner, in order to give me time to remark him.

"You will have plenty of opportunity to do this;" he added; "for immediately that he sees me, he will assail me with complaints. His life is one long murmur; whatever may be done for him, he is never satisfied; and his discontents are of the most puerile nature."

In less than ten minutes after the arrangement had been made, I heard the clattering of the patrol upon the stone stairs of the jail; and when they reached us, we followed them in their survey. Two men, carrying lamps, entered each cell in succession, with the soldiers, and closely examined the windows and sleeping-places of the convicts, after which the doors were barred and locked by the turnkeys.

Count Beleznay is lodged on the third floor of the prison; and when we arrived opposite to his cell the soldiers made way for me, in order that I might obtain an immediate view of him; while the Comptroller, as soon as the key was turned,

entered and addressed him, in order to divert his attention from us.

The apartment, for such his place of confinement may in truth be termed, is about eight feet square, with a good-sized window, strongly barred, and opening near the ceiling; and whitewashed walls, scrupulously clean. His bed was well-arranged, and he had a chair and a table, the only ones I had seen in the prison. In short, having hitherto looked upon nothing within the walls but filth and wretchedness, I was quite unprepared for the aspect of comparative comfort exhibited by his solitary abode.

But the appearance of the criminal himself surprised me much more than that of his cell. As the Comptroller had foretold, the moment that he perceived him, he rose from his seat, and began to pour into his ear some tale of dissatisfaction. He was bitter in invective; and voluble to a degree that was almost extraordinary; but he never once during the whole tirade raised his voice above a murmur; it was deep, concentrated passion that blenched his lip, and made his limbs

quiver, but his words could scarcely be distinguished a yard off.

He must be about eight-and-thirty years old, of middling stature, but Herculean frame; and—were it not for a marked and sinister expression, which, like the brand of Cain, has written dark characters upon his countenance—with one of the finest heads imaginable; his profile is precisely like those which we see so often upon the ancient medals. His hair, which had evidently been arranged with considerable care, was parted along the top of the head, and fell upon his shoulders in large heavy curls; his beard was thick and bushy, and trimmed with the utmost precision. In short, had he been about to present himself in the first *salon* of Vienna, he could not have made his toilet with more elaborate attention. He was dressed in a vest and trowsers of white cloth, with leather boots reaching to the knee. His shirt-collar was folded back from his throat, and his wristbands were turned over his sleeves; and this strange foppery contrasted painfully with the chain which fell from his waist, and bound

together the iron bands that encircled his ancles.

I was assured that, although day after day, and month after month went by, without his seeing a single individual save the prison-officers, he had never once relaxed in this extreme personal care, in which he seemed to take great delight; and that he constantly talked of the period of his enlargement, as though long years had not yet to intervene, with a savage joy—not as an event which was to restore him to the bosom of his family, and to enable him to make an effort to redeem a blighted name; not as a time when, by earnest prayer and good example, he might prove to the world and to his fellow-men, that his heart was not all evil, and that some human feeling still existed within him, urging him to expiation and repentance, and turning his stubborn nature to other and holier thoughts; but as the happy moment when he might revenge himself in the blood of his brother Charles, for the waste of life to which he had been subjected for his sake—hurl upon the head of another who had injured him, the fate which should be as sure as it had

been slow—and then terminate his own existence, which, when his work was done, would have become valueless.

Thus the thirst for blood in this devoted family would seem to be almost unappeasable—even with his parricide brother for the subject of his meditations during the dark hours of his captivity, the wretched Beleznay still meditates and talks of murder to be committed ten years hence!

I have already mentioned that the criminal had a wife and children. When he was condemned for his attempt on the life of his brother and the murder of that brother's friend, his eldest boy was about five years of age; just old enough to be ruined by bad example, or to be saved by judicious and religious training; and at that frightful moment, the high-minded and virtuous Archduchess-Palatine at once came forward like a good angel, and took the unhappy child under her own protection. With admirable judgment, she removed him from his home which had become the by-word of disgrace, and from the country where his race was dishonoured for ever—and

placed him in the hands of a pious family in a distant land, where he is called by a new name, brought up in a new spirit, and totally severed from the dark associations of his childhood. The noble design has met a blessing; the boy's disposition promises to be gentle, submissive, and obedient; and all must fervently trust that he will repay by a life of principle and honour the noble charity of this high-hearted Princess.

CHAPTER IX.

A TRANSITION — THE GERMAN THEATRE — SCHILLER'S ROBBERS — GOETHE'S FAUST — THEATRE OF BUDA — MADEMOISELLE CARL — MADAME STOLL — MADAME GRILL — NATIONAL PECULIARITIES — AMATEUR CLAQUEURS — EARLY HOURS — THE HUNGARIAN THEATRE — PRETTY WOMEN — PRIMA DONNA — MADAME SCHODEL — HUNGARIAN CHARACTER.

I AM now about to transport my readers from a prison-cell to an opera-box, from guilt to gaiety, without any intermediate gradations; or it may be thought that I have become a mere chronicler of horrors.

Pesth boasts two theatres; without calculating the Arena, which is situated in one of the suburbs, and is of course only available during the summer months. The larger of the two is the German Theatre, built near the quay, and to which the Redoute is attached. The performances

are various, and always respectable; the orchestra is admirable, and the *prima donna* both handsome and talented.

It is singular enough that when I passed through Pesth in 1836, I chanced to witness the representation of Schiller's Robbers; and on this occasion, by as mere an accident, the first time that we attended the theatre, we were regaled with the Faust of Goethe. I confess that I was bitterly disappointed in its general effect, although Mephistophiles was played by Döring of Stuttgard, an actor of considerable celebrity, and the beautiful heroine by Madame Grill, who was well worthy of her *rôle*. But even the poetry of Goethe, beautiful as it is, is no counterbalance to the weariness of the drama upon the stage. The long-drawn dialogues, rife with metaphysics and mysticism, become almost soporifics after a time; and were it not for the fine action at the close of the piece, I should be tempted to declare the sublime and wonderful *chef-d'œuvre* of the great German to be the most stupid affair on the *scène* that I ever attempted to sit out.

The house is very well fitted up; the stage

extremely spacious; and the *coup-d'œil* greatly improved by the handsome Archducal *lóge* which occupies the centre of the dress tier, profusely draped with crimson velvet fringed with gold, and supported by gilt caryatides bearing lamps. There is nevertheless a meagreness of effect produced by the absence of proscenium boxes, the sides of the stage being occupied only by silver chandeliers, which are lighted when the court visit the theatre; the decorations also, although correct in taste, are very cold in tint; and there is a sombreness about the aspect of the house which detracts greatly from its beauty; but, *en revanche*, I never saw a stage so splendidly mounted in any capital that I have visited—many of the scenes are perfect works of art, and vie with the productions of Stanfield; the dresses are magnificent, and the number of subordinates employed almost extraordinary.

This is, of course, the Court Theatre; for those of Buda, as we were informed, were very inferior in every respect; but we felt no inclination to make the trial, one of them being an *al-fresco* place of resort at a considerable distance from our

residence; and the other a *ci-devant* church attached to a convent of Carmelites in the fortress, which when he dislodged the fraternity, Joseph II. presented to the city for this irreverent purpose.

Be it superstition, or what it may, the knowledge of its previous appropriation quite prevented us from attending it; and the more particularly, that, with the exception of displacing the cross that surmounted the tower, no effort has been made to alter the exterior of the building, which bears all the marks of its former intention; and you require to be assured as you pass it that it is a place of amusement, ere you can reconcile the fact to yourself.

The frequenters of the German Theatre at Pesth are fortunate in the possession of an accomplished *prima donna*. Mademoiselle Carl is a very fine and graceful woman, with a voice of great compass, over which she has extraordinary control. Were I inclined to be critical, I should say that her defect was an excess of art, which forces the *cantatrice* upon your memory at times when you should only feel the character that she per-

sonates. She has great talent, but no genius—for in nothing, perhaps, is the existence of genius more palpable than in vocal music. In short, as an *artiste*, Mademoiselle Carl always satisfies, but never surprises you—she is full of *esprit*, but soul is wanting; and meanwhile, as I have before stated, she is extremely handsome, eminently graceful, and dresses magnificently.

There is, moreover, a mystery flung over *la Carl* which is not without its influence on the spirits of her admirers. She is generally understood to be the natural daughter of a Prussian Prince; and it is whispered that she is shortly to make a brilliant marriage, which, while it will ensure to herself a more decided station in society, will nevertheless deprive the German opera of Pesth of its chief ornament.

The first tenor (M. Stoll) has a good deal of taste and some science, and when not forced into a *rôle* beyond his strength, executes his music very pleasingly; but his voice is weak, and he sings with effort. The choruses are admirable, and the orchestra irreproachable. Of the other vocalists of the company, none exceed mediocrity.

Madame Grill, the first actress, is a charming person, as graceful in her comedy as she is touching in her graver characters; and her appearance never fails to elicit as great a manifestation of applause as the frequenters of this theatre ever permit themselves to indulge. There is no enthusiasm about the audience, but rather a species of *gêne*, which is felt even in the expression of their satisfaction; and although at Pesth, you instinctively remember Germany and its police, as you remark the constraint of those around you.

The absurd custom of calling forward the performers to bow and curtsey their gratitude to the public for their very ill-timed applause is here carried to a most ridiculous height; for not only is the murdered hero or heroine of the piece compelled to resuscitate at the conclusion of the performance, but at the end of every act some party in the house summons its particular favourite; and a *feu-de-joie* of prostrations is kept up throughout the evening.

In one respect I greatly prefer the theatres of Pesth to our own. Only one piece is played each

night, unless its extreme brevity should render it necessary to add a ballet or a vaudeville to make up the time; and thus the performance, which commences at half-past six, terminates at nine, having just sufficed to amuse you very agreeably for an hour or two, and then to leave your evening free; instead of absorbing six consecutive hours, as is often the case in England; and bequeathing to the patient play-goer who sits out the whole performance, a headache and a restless night.

But the most interesting theatre in Pesth is decidedly the Hungarian, or National Theatre; where all the performers are Hungarians, speaking their own language, and in many cases singing their own music, and wearing their own costumes. It was with great difficulty that a few patriotic spirits succeeded in establishing this very desirable place of amusement. The Government, far from lending any assistance or encouragement, were earnestly adverse to the measure; and a vast deal of nonsense was talked, even by some of the Hungarian nobles themselves, about its exciting the spirits of the people, and leading to *émeutes* and disorder. The originators of the idea were

not, however, to be so lightly discouraged; and the trial was made at Buda on a very small scale, within the last six years. The result answered their hopes; assistance was offered on all sides; the boxes were taken as soon as the house was opened; two of them being entered upon the books as rented by "the Hungarian Ladies." Sums of money were forwarded to the Committee, and the performances commenced under the gratuitous directorship of our excellent and talented friend M. Döbrentei. I can imagine no one better fitted for this difficult and invidious post; for he is all suavity, energy, and patriotism, with the best heart and the kindest disposition in the world; and is, moreover, as firm as he is conciliating.

The Hungarian people proved themselves worthy of the effort that had been made for their amusement, as well as of possessing institutions of their own in their own land. Indeed so perfectly irreproachable was the bearing even of the lower classes, that no excuse remained for preventing the erection of a National Theatre at Pesth; and the present plain, but commodious

building was consequently raised by subscription in 1834, without pecuniary assistance from either the Crown or the Diet.

It was first proposed by Gabriel Földváry, Vice-Count of the Municipality of Pesth; and many members of that body gave considerable sums of money towards its completion, as well as several of the nobles who were on the Committee; while the ground on which it stands was presented to the city by the Prince Grassalkovitch. The Commitat of Pesth had previously voted money to the National Theatre at Buda; which this more spacious erection was, of course, intended to supersede; but without which it would probably never have had its existence.

It is a very handsome house, fitted with blue and silver; and the space which in the German Theatre is occupied by the Archducal *lôge* is here appropriated to the National Club; another box belongs to the Hungarian Academy, and the Palatine rents a third on the right of the stage.

In talent the Hungarian Theatre yields in nothing to its rival on the quay; and in the beauty

of its actresses it very far exceeds it. There are half-a-dozen as lovely women on the boards of the *Pesti Magyar Színház,* as ever were grouped together in the magic temple of Wych-street; and all genuine Hungarians. The house is moreover better proportioned than the other, well lighted with gas, and altogether more attractive in its general aspect, although upon a smaller scale.

But the pride of the National Theatre is its *prima donna;* and it will be readily believed that the rival queens of song, la Carl and la Schodel, divide the homage of the town between them. As for me, I declare unhesitatingly for la Schodel; much as I admire the German *cantatrice.* As a woman Carl is infinitely the most attractive; but as an actress and a singer, I greatly prefer the Schodel. She is the very incarnation of soul—she pours out her voice as if by inspiration, and you forget the artist through her own genius.

Her Norma is magnificent; full of a fearful sentiment that thralls you; and you yield yourself the more willingly to the spell that you are conscious of her being equally thralled herself.

She is a Transylvanian, and was educated at the Musical Academy of Kolosvar, (Clausenberg,) where, when still extremely young, she engaged the affections of M. Schodel, the professor of the piano-forte, to whom, on the conclusion of her studies, she was united.

The whole *corps d'opera* were formed by Madame Schodel; and she has acquitted herself admirably of her very arduous task. The choruses are as full and as perfect as at the other house.

As a woman Madame Schodel is as irreproachable, as she is accomplished as a singer; and although far from a handsome person, there is a fine oriental cast about her which tells well upon the stage; and her action is always correct and graceful. Some of her bursts of song are electrifying; and her upper notes are peculiarly clear and sweet.

Nothing can be more marked than the difference between the audiences of the two theatres. It is difficult to remember that you are in the same city, when you pass from one to the other. The joyousness, the restlessness, the enthusiasm of the

national character, all *come out* (to use an artistic phrase,) in strong relief, during the periods of relaxation; and I have always been much struck by its affinity to that of the Irish. There is the same noble generosity of spirit, and openness of heart; the same bold recklessness, and anxious gallantry: in short, the points of resemblance are so marked and so numerous, that I should think it impossible for any one to live long among the Magyars without seizing them as a matter of course.

The Hungarians are ardent in their love, and fervid in their hate: full of animal courage and stern endurance; despising fear, and jealous of dishonour; capable of strong attachment, and chivalric in their ideas of right and wrong. Nevertheless they are not perfection—nor am I about to paint them as such; for there is a *laisser aller* system of social tactics in the country, especially among the higher orders, that makes a sad blot on their national escutcheon. Of course there are glorious exceptions; but I am speaking of them as a nation, and as a truthful chronicler I must perform my duty.

How strangely human events and human actions are linked together! I begin with a critique on the theatres, and end with a discussion on national morality.

CHAPTER X.

AN ELECTION—PICTURESQUE COUP-D'ŒIL—THE COUNCIL-HALL—THE PEASANT-NOBLES—HUNGARIAN NOBILITY—THE YOUNG GRAF—THE GALLERY—MORNING TOILETS—THE OPPONENTS—LIBERAL FEELING IN THE COUNTY—PIERRE ET PAUL—RELIGIOUS DISSENSIONS — POLITICAL PRIESTS — ARMED VOTERS—SUBLIMITY OF A CROWD—COUNT RÁDAY—THE LADIES *v.* THE ECCLESIASTICS — THE BANNER—ELECTIONEERING POLICY — POLITICAL COQUETRY — THE BALLOT.

It may be remembered, that in one of my former chapters I mentioned the secession of Count Ráday from the representation of the County of Pesth, and the consequent probability of an approaching election. I was not disappointed in my hope of witnessing it, and at once sketched the scene while it was fresh in my memory.

I must however previously mention that the

city had been all alive for several days, with the arrival of the voters from all parts of the county. They paraded the streets at night in parties of twenty or thirty, with musical instruments, singing their wild national melodies, and even dancing. All was bustle and excitement; and my expectations were comparatively raised that I should now have an admirable opportunity of witnessing the national character in its full development.

The elections, as I believe I have already stated, take place in the County Hall, adjoining the municipal prison; and thither I accordingly went, attended by a couple of friends, at half-past eight o'clock in the morning.

Early as it was, however, we were far from being among the first to arrive; the court was crowded, and I could not suppress a shudder as I passed through the shouting, noisy throng, and remembered the parricide Beleznay, and his exposure on that very spot.

There was a dash of the picturesque in the aspect of the court, even crowded as it was however, which soon recalled me to the present.

Many of the electors had come from distant parts of the province; and their peasant-attendants, wearied by the heat and hurry about them, had gathered into groups, and lain down to sleep in those graceful and unstudied attitudes by which nature seems to mock at the refinements of art, and to assert her own supremacy.

Their vests, and loose drawers of white linen, and their broad hats decorated with flowers, long grass, or feathers, and sometimes with all together, giving them a holiday appearance which relieved the bustling and business-look of their excited employers.

And to the bauer it *was* a holiday; for he was happily indifferent to the issue of the day's struggle. Royalist or Liberal, Protestant or Papist, let him gain who might, the peasant knew that his own position would probably still remain the same; and therefore with the uproar about him for his lullaby, he calmly composed himself to sleep with a philosophical disregard of all external impediments that might well be envied by many a prouder personage.

On arriving at the entrance of the Hall, we

found considerable difficulty in making our way; which was, however, gradually accomplished by my Hungarian friend, who claimed from the courtesy of the crowd a passage for "the foreign lady;" an appeal which was always readily and cheerfully answered.

Nearly all the persons who blocked up the staircase and passages were of the order of the *bocskoros nemesek* whom I have already mentioned; no individual unless either noble, or holding office, being competent to vote; and it was really laughable to reflect that the troops of coarsely-clad, red-handed, and rude-looking agriculturists by whom we were jostled on all sides, were among the nobles of the land.

There is no country under Heaven where nobility is at so low a par; or rather perhaps I should say, on so unequal a basis; and I was so much amused by the classification lately bestowed on it by a humorous friend of mine, to whom I had frankly declared my inability to disentangle its mazes, that I will give it in his own words.

"The nobility of Hungary are of three orders

—the mighty, the moderate, and the miserable—the Esterházys, the Batthyanyis, and *id genus omne* are the capital of the column—the shaft is built of the less wealthy and influential; and the base (and a very substantial one it is,) is a curious congeries of small landholders, herdsmen, vine-growers, waggoners, and pig-drivers. Nay, you may be unlucky enough to get a *nemes* as a servant, and this is the most unhappy dilemma of all, for you cannot solace yourself by beating him when he offends you, as he is protected by his privileges! and he appeals to the Court of the Comitat for redress. The country is indebted to Maria Theresa for this pleasant confusion; who, when she repaid the valour of the Hungarian soldiers with a portion of their own land, and a name to lend it grace, forgot that many of these individuals were probably better swordsmen than proprietors; and instead of limiting their patent of nobility to a given term of years, laid the foundation of a state of things as inconvenient as it is absurd."

I was immediately reminded by his closing remark of a most ridiculous scene, which although

in itself a mere trifle, went far to prove the truth of his position.

My readers are probably aware that none pay tolls in Hungary save the peasants; and it chanced that on one occasion when we were passing from Pesth to Buda over the bridge of boats, the carriage was detained by some accidental stoppage just beside the tollkeeper's lodge, when our attention was arrested by a vehement altercation between the worthy functionary its occupant, and a little ragged urchin of eleven or twelve years of age, who had, as it appeared, attempted to pass without the preliminary ceremony of payment.

The tollkeeper handled the supposed delinquent with some roughness, as he demanded his fee; but the boy stood his ground stoutly, and asserted his free right of passage as a nobleman! The belligerent party pointed to the heelless shoes and ragged jerkin of the culprit, and smiled in scorn. The lad for all reply bade him remove his hand from his collar, and let him pass at his peril; and the tone was so assured in which he did so, that the tollkeeper became grave, and looked somewhat doubtful; when just at the

moment up walked a sturdy peasant, who, while he paid his kreutzer, saluted the young *Graf*, and settled the point.

It was really broad farce. The respectably-clad and comfortable-looking functionary loosed his hold in a moment, and the offending hand as it released the collar of the captive, lifted his hat, while he poured out his excuses for an over-zeal, arising from his ignorance of the personal identity of this young scion of an illustrious house, who was magnanimously pleased to accept the apology, and to raise his own dilapidated cap in testimony of his greatness of soul, as he walked away in triumph. Cruikshank would have had food for a *chef-d'œuvre!*

But to return to the election. After having succeeded in ascending the first flight of stairs, we found the door of the Hall like the entrance of a hive when the bees are swarming; and it was with the greatest difficulty that we made our way to the second staircase, leading to the gallery, half of which had been appropriated to the ladies, and shut in by latticed doors.

Here I was instantly admitted with the greatest

courtesy; and in consideration of my being a foreigner, my friends were allowed to enter with me; and a chair at once offered for me to stand upon, in order to secure an uninterrupted view of the Hall.

The scene was a most extraordinary one. Immediately beside and about me were upwards of a hundred elegantly-dressed females, even at this early hour, (as is the habit in Germany as well as here,) wearing their *corsages décolletés*, and a profusion of jewels. Before and below me a dense crowd of men, wedged together in a manner which defies description, and which nothing but an extreme state of excitement could have enabled them to endure; while the uproar exceeded everything that I had ever conceived, even familiar as I have long been with foreign crowds and enthusiasm. Of one fact I am quite certain, that I never knew the full meaning of the word *noise* until I attended the Pesth election.

The shouting and clamour of an English mob about the hustings, during the speech of an unpopular candidate, is bad enough; but there the uproar escapes in the open air, and expends itself

in the distance; while the voices of between three and four thousand persons, pent together within the Municipal Hall of Pesth, were flung back and prolonged until they were really deafening.

The Hall is octagonal, swept by a gallery on all its sides, and "illustrated" by a series of oil-paintings of distinguished men, who have been magisterially connected with the county. On the present occasion it was, as I have already remarked, dense with human life; and above the mass of heads were to be seen swords and sticks to which were appended placards inscribed with the names of the rival candidates, Dubravitsky and Táhy—the chandeliers were also covered with them; and a tall, spear-headed banner, bearing the motto "Liberty and Patriotism," was sacred to the name of the latter.

Before I proceed further, however, with the business of the day, I must mention that the Liberals of the County had felt so much aggrieved by the severity of the Government towards Count Ráday, that not one of their party would consent to supersede him in the Diet; and thus the conflict

became one of religious instead of political tenets; Dubravitsky representing the Reform, and Táhy the Roman Catholic interest. "*C'est une lutte, Madame,*" said a gentleman near me, "*entre Pierre et Paul—on crie, et on s'excite; et en attendant, l'un vaut bien l'autre.*"

But I confess that to me the question did not seem to end there; for in the present transition-state of Hungary, a religious feud would act more perniciously a hundredfold on the moral progression of the country than political agitation. Hungary has not forgotten that before the reign of Maria Theresa she was almost a Protestant land; looking upon Popery as upon a deluding superstition that she had been enabled to cast off; and seeing convents and nunneries appropriated to national institutions and national establishments. She remembers also the internal convulsions amid which the old faith was again partially forced upon her, and the heart-burnings which it brought along with it; and she justly looks with a jealous eye upon every attempt to strengthen its authority.

As regarded the candidates themselves, both

being Royalists, and pledged to the same cause, the result could not differ to the county, save in the quota of talent brought to the task, and its attendant respectability to all parties concerned; but to the country at large the question was one of vital importance, particularly at the present period, when the Roman Catholic clergy, upheld and supported by Austria, are making strenuous efforts to establish absolute dominion over the minds of the people.

It is lamentable to reflect that religious bigotry should so blind an enlightened government as to permit her to confiscate *Bibles*, the pure word of God, containing no political bias whatever, on their arrival on her frontiers; and to render their sale within her dominions a sort of contraband trade, requiring caution and secrecy. Surely the way to establish the truths of a religion is to lay them open to controversy, and comparison, and conviction; and not to destroy all facilities of testing their validity!

There is danger, also, if we look upon the measure as one of mere worldly expediency, that she must ultimately expose her own weakness by

persisting in this line of conduct; for there is a steadiness of progression throughout all Europe in the present day, which must force its way despite all attempts to arrest it; and the greater the impediments may have been by which it was for a time checked and trammelled, the more violent will the reaction necessarily become when these are swept away.

I was much struck on the occasion of this election with the activity of the priests, who had mustered in great numbers to support the electors of Táhy by their presence, although they were unable to vote. Their flushed and excited faces seemed to me strangely unclerical, and ill suited to men whose profession should be one of holiness and peace; and the vehemence with which they urged on the clamour of their party, threw my thoughts back upon those fearful times, when in my own dear land, the same feelings and the same actors had led so many victims to the axe and the stake!

Just below our section of the gallery was placed the table of the President, while two others traversed the body of the apartment throughout its

whole length ; and the opposing parties had each taken possession of a particular portion of the Hall, occupying both tables and floor, whence individuals were occasionally dislodged by the increasing pressure and movement, and flung among the ranks of their enemies, where their placards were instantly destroyed, and themselves thrust back into the midst of their friends.

One extraordinary feature of the scene was the gleaming of the ornamented scabbards of the swords worn by four-fifths of the electors, as the mark of their noble birth—fearful accompaniments, as it at first seemed to me, in such a scene as this, where the passions were at work, and the breasts of men heaving with a thousand conflicting feelings.

But I did their wearers injustice. Despite all the excitement, and the jarring of private animosities and public jealousies, only one weapon was drawn throughout the day ; and that one blade flew forth when a priest stood at the elbow of the swordsman ; but he had more judicious friends about him, who drove it back into the scabbard ere it had wrought, or even threatened

evil; and those of all the other electors in the Hall were used merely as peaceful staffs for their paper banners.

There is something awfully sublime in the aspect of an excited crowd. A storm among the mountains—a tempest at sea—are wild, and strange, and terrible; but the workings of a human mass of passion, and struggle, and heart-burning, ever ready to burst forth, and heaving under its own violence, are to me infinitely more fearful.

You cannot sympathise with the thunder that rends the rocks, nor the blast that drives the waves against the midnight sky, only to dash them back again into the bowels of the deep sea —you hear, and gaze, and tremble, amid these mighty convulsions of nature; and you quail because you feel your littleness, and that you are a mere atom in the struggle which is going on about you. But in the storm of human passion, and the crush of human strife, it is far otherwise: your spirit vibrates to the touch of your common nature, and your heart heaves instinctively as the mighty mass rocks, and sways, and bends

before you. You know that there is a world in every breast that is panting with hope or fear—a meaning in every eye, and on every lip. That these are neither rocks or waves which are made the unconscious agents of the bolt or the blast, but responsible and sentient beings, each playing his own part, and obeying his own impulses.

Am I wrong then in declaring that of all the convulsions of nature, those produced by human passions are the most awful?

This may seem to be a very uncalled-for digression, after the simile of "Peter and Paul" which I have just quoted; but it is not so; for the strife and struggle at the Pesth election was as great as though the welfare of the whole nation had been at stake. The public mind had been greatly excited by the Ráday question; nor had it since been tranquillized by the determination of the Liberal party not to supply a successor to his seat in the Diet. Upon this foundation, the superstructure of religious animosity had been built up; and the delay which had taken place in the election itself had given time for all these feelings to work and ferment until they overflowed.

It must be understood that the opposing parties did not propose themselves as candidates for the representation of Pesth, but were nominated by the County. M. Dubravitsky had already served in the last memorable Diet, with considerable distinction; having been universally consistent in his principles, and having demonstrated them with ability. He is also a member of the Municipal Court of Pesth; and much esteemed by his townsmen.

M. Táhy had never before been called to the Chamber, and although a very estimable man, was considered as likely to prove a very inefficient legislator. Be this as it might, they had each had "greatness thrust upon them," and were here to abide the issue.

A sudden and tremendous accession of noise at the entrance of the Hall turned our attention in that direction; and after some time the apparition of a Magnate in full costume made its appearance above the heads of the crowd. It was Count Ráday; borne on the shoulders of two men, amid the cheers of all the Reform party. I had long wished to see him; for his name had

been familiar to me since my first arrival in Hungary; and my wish could not have been gratified on a more interesting occasion.

He was evidently in a state of great excitement; but I was at once struck by the noble and aristocratic character of his head: I have seldom seen a finer; and as he swept back the clustering auburn hair from his brow, and glanced upwards to the gallery, there was an expression about him so blent of enthusiasm and tenderness, that I scarcely required to be told that the sweet and gentle-looking woman towards whom his eyes were raised, and who leant over the gallery with such intense interest, was his wife. As he sat upon the shoulders of his two bearers, he unbuckled his sword, and exhibited on its point the name of Dubravitsky, upon which the shouts were redoubled.

For a time the energy of the opposing party was evidently damped; and I scarcely wondered that it should be so, for even to me there was excitement in the very presence of Count Ráday: but after a time the uproar increased tenfold; and the agitation in my immediate neighbourhood was

extreme, when, on glancing round, I perceived that the ladies had taken part in the business of the day by exhibiting immense printed placards all bearing the name of Dubravitsky. "*Ç'a va bien;*" whispered my friend; "*les dames valent bien les prêtres.*" I need scarcely say that he was a reformist.

After some time, during which fresh parties of electors had contrived to edge themselves into the Hall, a murmur grew that the President was about to enter; and for awhile there was a partial calm; but it only gave place to renewed tumult and cheering when his *huissiers* made their appearance, endeavouring to force a way for the official without whom no business could be transacted; and it was with extreme difficulty that they at length accomplished their task.

He was followed by the Clerk of the Court, and the rival heroes of the day; and when they had reached the table, and seated themselves, the excitement was at its height; hats, swords, and handkerchiefs were waved in the air; and the hoarse shouting of the assembly was so painful that for the first five minutes I covered my ears with my hands, quite unable to support it.

"Dubravitsky!" screamed the Protestant party: "Táhy!" vociferated the Catholics; and then came the rattling of swords, the trampling of feet, and the struggling of strong men to secure to themselves at least space to breathe. It was in vain that the Clerk of the Court rang his bell, and pealed out his mandate of silence; the cries of *Halljuk! Halljuk!* (Hear! Hear!) were so loud and so multitudinous that they controverted their own ostensible design, and entirely drowned the voice of the officer.

Amid this confusion, the eye of the President chanced to fall on the banner to which I have alluded; and in the first interval of partial silence, he rose authoritatively from his seat, and ordered its immediate removal from the Hall, as an illegal accessory, forbidden by the statutes of the land; at the same time censuring the conduct of the party who had possessed themselves of a flag belonging to the municipality, and not intended to further individual interests.

It is impossible to describe the effect of this address: the Dubravitskys forcing themselves towards the obnoxious banner in order to eject it;

and the Táhytes clustering about it to prevent its removal; and it was at this moment when the priests were the most active and the most violent, that the sword to which I have already alluded, was drawn. Happily no violence ensued, although the struggle was convulsive between the opposite parties; but eventually, after the lapse of half an hour, during which the Táhytes persisted in not only retaining their banner, but even in unfurling it repeatedly before the eyes of the President, he rose a second time, and preceded by his *huissiers*, succeeded in leaving the Hall; a movement so unexpected and inexplicable that it sobered the meeting, who in their very curiosity to ascertain its meaning suffered their voices to subside beneath the official bell.

A semblance of order being thus produced, one of the members of the Municipality was lifted upon the shoulders of a couple of men, whence he announced that the disregard which had been shown towards the official authority of the President had so deeply offended the feelings of that functionary, that he had deemed it incumbent on him to withdraw; nor would he

again enter the Hall until a deputation was dispatched with the apologies of the meeting, and a request for his return.

Profiting by the lull, M. Táhy, who found that the day was going against him in spite of all the money which he had expended in furtherance of "the good cause," sprang upon a chair; and after having been greeted by a volley of cheers from his own party, and howls from his opponents, was at length suffered to speak, when he thanked his friends and supporters for their zeal, but stated that as he had infringed the law, he considered that he was no longer competent to stand for the County, and should accordingly, although with feelings of great triumph at the suffrages of the public, and deep gratitude for its favour, at once withdraw. Cheers on one side and laughter on the other followed the oration of the candidate, prophetic of his own overthrow; but his party "showing," as an Irish friend of mine phrased it, "more pluck than himself," refused to anticipate defeat, and continued to keep their ground; although a few of the most prudent among them insisted on the propriety of remov-

ing the banner before the return of the authorities: a ceremony which was accomplished with considerable difficulty through the ranks of the Dubravitskys, who after suffering it to pass the threshold, broke it up outside, and threw it back in fragments among the excited electors in the Hall; and it was amid a renewed storm of voices, that the President was once more ushered in by the Deputation with Count Ráday at their head.

Meanwhile new reinforcements of voters were continually arriving, but their advent beyond the entrance of the chamber was impossible; and they only increased the confusion by their impotent efforts to join the crowd within; nor was it for another hour that the President could sufficiently ascertain the sense of the assembly to announce that the feeling of the County appeared to be in favour of Dubravitsky, but that as a strong party had declared for Táhy, he should at once proceed with the ballot.

Amid the shouts which succeeded this announcement, however, an unlooked-for impediment arose in Dubravitsky himself; who, having with extreme difficulty contrived by his own

popularity and the efforts of the Clerk of the Court to obtain a hearing, laid his hand upon his heart in the most approved manner, and declined the honour of representing the County, grateful as he felt for the suffrages of the electors. He was in weak health, and incompetent to encounter the mental and physical exertion consequent on such responsibility: in short, he had pledged himself to his family that, let the result of the ballot be what it might, nothing should induce him to take his seat at the Diet.

His further speech was prevented by the tumult of dissatisfaction that its commencement had called forth: the Táhytes were vociferous in their anticipated triumph, and his own party indignant at the unworthy return made to their exertions; all was clamour and confusion; amid which, however, the voices of a score of Dubravitskys contrived to make themselves audible in screaming forth their perseverance in his cause.

Three times the President rose to speak; and the bell of the Clerk of the Court rang out to enforce silence, amid cries of "*Halljuk! Halljuk!*" which only defeated their own purpose, ere he

could overcome the uproar; but at length he succeeded in obtaining a hearing, when he declared that if M. Dubravitsky saw fit to decline the representation of the County, he could not be compelled to accept it by clamour; and that, convinced of the sincerity of his reluctance, the County must at once nominate a fresh opponent to M. Táhy.

I can find no words, nor shall I seek them, in which to convey an idea of the effect of this address—it was deafening—but the transition was still more extraordinary when the head of Count Ráday once more appeared above the crowd, as he waved his hand to enforce attention; and a deep stillness succeeded to the previous outcry, as he said coldly and proudly that he prayed the supporters of Dubravitsky to desist from urging upon him the representation of Pesth, which was a boon to be sought, and not an honour to be rejected.

As he ceased speaking, he disappeared among the crowd: but the few and forcible words in which he had expressed his feeling, produced intense effect upon the assembly—and there was

a haughty indignation seated on his brow, and flashing from his eye, which said more than the most high-wrought reproach. Nevertheless, the confusion soon recommenced; and it was evident that the Reform party were anxious to prevent the return of Táhy, and apprehensive that a second Catholic candidate might be proposed; thus entreaties poured in upon Dubravitsky, against which, however, he continued firm for a considerable time, still pleading his weak health; but eventually, having played out the comedy of *comment se faire valoir* even to the last scene with wonderful perseverance, he of course sacrificed himself to the wishes of the County, and consented to abide the ballot.

As I had heard from some of his friends that he had no dislike whatever to returning to the Diet; but, on the contrary, felt gratified at the trust reposed in him by the electors, I was considerably puzzled to account for the singular *rôle* which he had thought proper to enact in the drama of the day; but my shrewd neighbour, to whom I have already made allusion, at once furnished me with the solution of the enigma.

M. Dubravitsky felt wounded that any ballot should be necessary. When he learnt that he had been proposed by the County, he flattered himself that he should have been at once unanimously elected; forgetting that party-spirit would probably militate against such a decided demonstration on the part of the electors; and in the first paroxysm of indignation he had determined to withdraw from so unworthy a contest. He was not, however, proof against the enthusiasm of his own party; and accordingly the ballot was opened.

This ceremony took place in the court, at the foot of the great staircase: and as we were extremely anxious to see how the thing would be managed, we left the Hall, just as the President announced that any unqualified individual who ventured to vote, would, on detection, be imprisoned.

The qualification consisted in the voter being noble; no peasant holding land under his lord being, under any circumstances, eligible as an elector. A large table covered with green baize was surrounded by members of the Municipal

Court; and in it were sunk two round cavities to receive the balls, which were contained in two vases, the one being red, and the other blue. Each voter, as he approached the table, declared his name, and the town or village in which he resided, which were immediately registered by one of the Clerks of the Court; and then openly threw his ball into the cavity of the candidate for whom he desired to vote: many of the lower class, or "sandalled nobles," who could neither read nor write, requesting one of the officers to point out that which he sought.

It was curious to see the rapidity with which this portion of the ceremony went on: all was conducted with the greatest order, the turmoil of the Hall appeared to have subsided on the stairs; and each individual, as though he felt that the moment of action rather than of agitation had at length arrived, disposed of his ball, and retired from the table almost in silence.

For the first twenty minutes I was both amused and interested by this scene; but at the end of that time I began to feel that I had been standing for five hours and a half, amid heat, and noise,

and excitement, without a moment's rest either of body or mind; and I accordingly departed, satisfying myself with the promise of a friend who remained behind, that I should be informed of the result of the ballot immediately that it had closed.

In about three hours he fulfilled his pledge. M. Dubravitsky had been returned by a majority of six hundred.

CHAPTER XI.

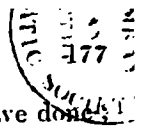
PESTH — THE BOOKSELLERS — STREETS, SIGNS, AND SAINTS—ST. CHRISTOPHER—CHRISTIAN MYTHOLOGY —ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUCENE—PRIESTLY DISCRETION —THE MIRACLE—CALM AT COURT.

PESTH is decidedly one of the most cheerful-looking cities in Europe; and much as the fearful inundation of 1838 was to be deplored as a national calamity, it greatly tended to improve the appearance of the town itself; where, profiting by their dearly-bought experience, those among the inhabitants who possessed the means of re-erecting their houses, substituted brick and stone for mud and timber. Many of the streets are as handsome as any in Vienna, and most of them considerably wider; the blocks of building are solid and regular, and the shops handsome and well fitted-up.

I recommend all travellers who have a taste for rococo to pay a visit to that of M. Herman Löwy, in Great Bridge-street, whose collection is a study for an antiquarian; and to all book-lovers to those of MM. Heckenast and Hartleben, in the Waitzner Gasse, whose intelligence and politeness to strangers merit to pass into a proverb. Their shops are a delightful lounge to the English traveller, who will find there works of every calibre in his own language, from Gibbon's Rome to the Book of Beauty; and, moreover, a ready and cheerful courtesy on the part of these gentlemen themselves, which may beguile for him many an otherwise weary hour.

There are extremely handsome signs appended to the shops in Vienna; but at Pesth they are so much more numerous that their effect is still greater, and many of them so well-imagined and so admirably executed, that I have seen many worse *tableaux* framed in gold, and figuring in a dining-room in our own land.

The idea of panelling them into the shop fronts, also, is a very good one, as the space thus afforded to the artist enables him to carry out his subject, and to express his meaning, much more



satisfactorily than he could otherwise have done; and I learn that many young painters execute these gorgeous signs almost gratuitously, in order to make themselves known; their names being always introduced into the picture: and that it was this fact which originated the elaborate habit of ornament that has since obtained so greatly in both cities; and which is carried to such a height that, in some instances, tradesmen have paid upwards of a hundred pounds for their shop-sign.

In Pesth the variety and beauty of these commercial coquettries is astonishing. There is a cigar-divan near the German Theatre which displays two: the one a snuff-taker, and the other a smoker, and both really admirable. Then there are mounted Magnates in their gorgeous costumes, and standing Magnates no less magnificent—Poles, and Spaniards, and Tyroleans, and Greeks, and Turks; among the latter King Otho, and Sultan Mahmoud; and Empresses, and Queens, and Archduchesses, all robed in state; with such brilliant extracts from the mythology as almost baffle enumeration. Nor are the cardinal virtues forgotten; Faith, Hope, and Charity each hold

their place, the last presiding over linens and flannels (no bad pictorial pun, by the way); the next raising her blue eyes to piles of spices and grains; and the first dispensing sponge-cakes and biscuits to little Cupid-clad boys, with profuse liberality. Next come the venerable Esculapiuses, and classically-dressed herbwomen of the apothecaries, and the English Lords and Spanish Grandees of the tailors; amid a confusion of nymphs, and peasants, and Wallachian women.

The second class of signs is equally amusing, although not so showy. The favourite ensign with the bakers is a brace of bears rampant, enwreathed with circular rolls, and overturning cornucopias of loaves and flour; the grocers cover an immense space with all the articles of their trade grouped together; and the pork-butchers put their sausages and lard under the protection of black lions and brindled tigers.

Nor are the signs the only mean of ornament in Pesth, as many of the houses in the old quarters of the city are partially painted in fresco; and numbers of them decorated with *alti-relievi*, having reference to the trade of the tenant; while

the residences of the nobles generally bear above the portal the blazonry of the family to whom they belong.

But the most colossal and ambitious ornament in Pesth figures immediately in front of our hotel windows, affixed to the shop of an apothecary which forms the angle of two streets; and who not content with the customary emblems of his calling, has erected a statue of St. Christopher leaning upon his club, with the child on his shoulder, at least nine feet in height, upon a pedestal of the same altitude.

Apropos des Saints! Many are probably not acquainted with the German St. Christopher, who is quite a different personage from him of France; a sort of local idol, almost dividing the public homage with St. John of Nepomucene, to each of whom I feel it my duty to devote a page or two, were it only to show the bigoted superstition of the German and Hungarian Catholics; who cling to their Christian Mythology in the nineteenth century as blindly as the Heathens did to theirs in the olden time; and sooth to say, even upon their

own evidence, the one is scarcely more respectable than the other.

Be it known then that St. Christopher was a grenadier in the Bavarian army; a man of mighty stature, and very enlarged ideas of individual independence: not particularly severe in his distinction between *meum* and *tuum;* and in short, (for the truth must be told,) a determined *mauvais sujet.*

It is singular enough that many names which now figure as saintly in the calendar, were originally known to belong very unequivocally to sinners; and if we are to believe that *sic itur ad astra* the creed must be a very comfortable one to adopt.

Among its many inconveniences, the life of Christopher the grenadier was especially embittered by the insufficiency of his rations. He was continually hungry, and generally unable to gratify the cravings of his appetite. After having devoured his own allotted portion, and accepted with thankfulness the contributions of his comrades, he was still far from being satisfied; and such being the case, he at last resolved to desert,

and to offer his services to any state or cause by which he should be well fed.

His adventures in this pursuit were more curious than romantic; and it would seem that, however his stomach might fare, his morals did not benefit by his erratic mode of existence: for after many years of wandering, his conscience began to trouble him even more than his appetite, and he determined to adopt new principles, and endeavour to nullify the past.

In this edifying resolution he wandered to and fro, introducing himself to hermits, and pilgrims, and other pious men; until on one occasion he arrived on the bank of a swift river, whose impetuous current had swept away the bridge which had once afforded a passage to the opposite shore; and where he found a hermit leaning upon his staff, and contemplating the recent ruin.

The embryo saint at once entered into conversation with the recluse, to whom he revealed the history of his past sins and his subsequent contrition; and by whom he was assured that if for the remainder of his life he would be content to inhabit a hut by the river-side, feeding upon the

roots and wild fruits of the neighbouring wood, and carrying upon his shoulders across the stream all the pilgrims who might ask of him this good service, his sins should be remitted. The penitent readily consented to these terms, and forthwith commenced his duties.

The river appeared to be very popular, and the wood unusually unprolific, and thus Christopher the ferryman generally went to his bed of moss both weary and hungered, but still he persisted; and after he had led this painful life for several years, he one day found a child watching the current with earnest eyes, and evidently desiring to pass to the other side. The usual question and reply having been made, the boy seated himself on the shoulder of his new acquaintance, and they were soon breasting the flood.

They had barely reached the centre of the stream, however, when the weight of the infant burthen began to augment, and the strength of Christopher almost failed beneath it.

"Sit lighter, my brave boy;" said the future Saint; "I have carried many a man of two score years across this ferry, clad in coarse serge, and

armed with his heavy staff, but never have I bent beneath any of them as I now totter under you."

"Move on, move on;" was the answer of the child; "the stream is deep, and the current is strong; move on, for we have yet half our work to do."

The penitent obeyed; but still the weight grew greater; "Sit lighter, sit lighter, my boy;" he said again; "or we shall both be lost: my knees tremble, and my breath is gone. Sit lighter, or I shall fail, and the current will overwhelm us."

"Christopher," replied the child; "you have been a great sinner; but there is always hope for those who repent. Toil on, toil on: we shall soon win the bank."

And he toiled on; and at length the bank was won; and the child slid from his shoulder and stood beside him surrounded by a circle of pale light; and great was the surprise of the ferryman to hear himself addressed in a voice which thrilled even to his soul: "Christopher," it said; "you are blessed this day, for you have borne the Son of God upon your shoulder—your sins are forgiven you." And as the voice ceased, the figure

disappeared, and the happy penitent breathing a fervent thanksgiving, laid himself down upon the bank, and died.

Who overheard and reported the conversation is not known; but it is certain that Saint Christopher is a very popular personage in Hungary; and in consequence of the closing episode of his history, he is always represented with a child upon his shoulder.

St. John of Nepomucene is a still more singular specimen of the various methods by which men may attain to holiness, and even to the crown of martyrdom. He was a Bohemian monk, and confessor to the Queen; and it is said that never did better-looking churchman don a stole, or con a breviary: his confessional was never empty; and his penitents quoted his piety, and performed his penances with obedient zeal.

All this, however, was simple enough, for it sufficed that he should be the keeper of the Queen's conscience to render him the fashion among all the fair pietists within reach; and accordingly his fame grew with time, until to doubt the holiness of the handsome John of Nepomucene would have

been held rank heresy throughout Bohemia. It would appear that a knowledge of this fact proved too strong a temptation for the confessor, and that the impressive text of Scripture, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," escaped his memory.

Vanity grew upon him: the vanity of the world where he knew that whispers of his personal and spiritual superiority were blent together; and soon in the solitude of his chamber his eyes began to linger over the fair face of a beautiful Madonna that hung above his reading-desk, until he forgot the saint in the woman; and unbidden thoughts glided through his mind like ground-meteors at midnight, full of the brightness which is born of corruption.

By slow degrees the priest became accustomed to their advent, and lingered over them fondly, for they had opened up a new world from which he had hitherto been shut out; and the passionate musings of his solitude grew into shape and form, until the vision of his regal penitent became continually present to his imagination waking or sleeping.

It is a tale on which I cannot linger. The confessor in an evil hour in turn confessed his sin, and it is whispered that the confidence did not displease the royal lady to whom it was made. In short, the martyrdom of the holy St. John grew out of as pretty a piece of scandal as ever amused the *désœuvrés* of a court.

It was rumoured that Her Majesty had sullied her high rank by unequivocal misconduct; and after every other effort had been ineffectual in discovering the partner of her guilt, it was deemed expedient to call forward her confessor, and to command him to reveal a secret which, from the nature of his office, must necessarily have been confided to him.

The priest, however, refused obedience. The seal of confession, he said, was not to be broken; and not even torture should wring from him one syllable tending to implicate his royal penitent, even supposing that he were able so to do. The King persisted, but the priest was invincible in his resolution; and at length he declared that he would rather suffer his tongue to be torn out than betray his office.

The Monarch, irritated by such determined opposition, in a moment of passion took him at his word; he was dragged upon a bridge across a swift river, his tongue plucked from the roots, flung into the stream, and his body hurled after it: when lo! a miracle—above the very spot where the corpse sank, glittered seven stars, which fell from the sky before the wondering and awe-struck gaze of the assembled crowd. Down, down they dropped slowly, until they rested on the water, marking out the direction where the body lay; and although in the mingled enthusiasm and terror of the moment many flung themselves into the stream, and sought to grasp them, they glided from the touch, and resumed their appointed places immediately that the impediment was removed.

Such a miracle of course cleared the fair fame of the Queen, whose Christian meekness enabled her to receive with readiness the regretful excuses of her repentant consort; and after a considerable lapse of time, as the stars still remained on their saintly watch, it was decided that the holiness of John of Nepomucene was placed beyond all doubt,

and that his body must be recovered, and interred with all the honours of canonisation.

The river was accordingly dragged, and both the body and the tongue of the martyr rescued; when his sanctity was placed beyond all doubt by the fact that although they had lain under water a sufficient time to produce decomposition in ordinary mortals, the remains of the confessor were as fresh as though he had died within the hour, and that all his wounds were bleeding as freely as if just inflicted.

All the Court, with the King and Queen at their head, assisted at the holy obsequies; and John of Nepomucene, priest and martyr, and moreover, as my readers must readily admit, the most discreet of saints, became thenceforward an object of great veneration in this part of Europe.

He is the patron of bridges and of penitents; and midway of the line of boats which connects Pesth and Buda, is a little circular chapel, wherein he figures in a very soiled stole, surrounded by faded flowers, and pots of geraniums, to the great edification of the poor peasants who pass by; but he is to be seen in his greatest glory at Vienna,

in the church which bears his name, where above a lateral altar, he is exhibited as large as life, about to be hurled from the bridge; while beneath him, upon a sea of bronze, are prefigured the seven gold stars which are to avouch his sanctity, and restore, if they cannot save, the honour of the Queen.

All this is very deplorable; but it will give so perfect an insight into the state of Catholicism throughout the Austrian Empire, that I have not felt myself at liberty to omit its mention, preposterous as it is.

Thankful ought we to be, who are not required to offer worship to such questionable personages, and false gods, as the heroes of these two unedifying legends.

CHAPTER XII.

ISLANDS IN THE DANUBE — ST. MARGARET'S — THE ARCHDUKE'S GARDENS — TOPOGRAPHY OF THE ISLAND—THE ROYAL ABBESS—HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS—A ROYAL SAINT—ARPÁDIAN RELICS—RUINS — THE CONVENT-VAULTS — THE GOLDEN CROWN — SIZE OF THE ISLAND—TURKISH DEVASTATIONS.

THERE is a cluster of wooded islands just above Pesth, which, however they may tend to destroy the continuity of the Danube, add very considerably to the beauty of the landscape. Above Alt-Ofen are situated those of Palota, Pesth, and Great Ofner; and between that and Pesth the still prettier ones known as Little Ofen and Margaret Islands.

Both these last-named islets were presented by the sister-cities to the Archduke-Palatine, and they could not have fallen into better hands. The lesser one is of no note; nor has it any particu-

lar feature to challenge attention, beyond the extreme beauty of its outline, as it lies like a large lozenge amid the waters; but Margaret Island is a perfect gem in its way; and is, moreover, historically interesting.

It is about two miles and a half in length, and half a mile broad; and was for some time appropriated by the Palatine as a public promenade; but the destruction among the trees and vines was so great, that he was compelled to deny admission to the island from the Pesth side, and to limit the permission of ingress on the other shore to such individuals as, from the respectability of their appearance, might be presumed not to indulge in wanton mischief.

We had been told that the Margaret Island was pretty, but were nevertheless quite unprepared to find it so really beautiful as it is. From the water nothing is to be seen but stately trees, with here and there a stretch of turf; but the landing is no sooner effected, and the wooded belt passed, than the visitor finds himself in a large garden, full of fruits and flowers, and kept with the greatest care; whence he arrives at the *jardin anglais,*

which is dotted over with exotic trees and shrubs, in the midst of which stands a pretty *villarette;* the ground-floor serving as the residence of the head-gardener, and the upper apartments as the *pied-à-terre* of the Archduke when he visits the island.

The house is built against one of the three ruins which still exist of the good old times, when this lovely spot was the abode of royalty and religion; and before it stretches away a small vineyard of choice quality; which, in its turn, is once more succeeded by gardens and shrubberies. Every natural advantage has been carefully heightened; and despite the beds of rare and gorgeous blossoms which are scattered over the green-sward, art has been but the handmaiden of taste, and made everywhere subservient.

Such, as a general outline, is the Margaret Island; but its variety of sun and shadow, of flowers and forest-trees, its covered walks, its bright glimpses of the glancing river, its ivy-draped masses, and its hoar and mouldering ruins, defy mere verbal description.

The Island was formerly of much greater extent than it is at present; and was defended from the

overflows of the Danube by dams and walls. It boasted a village and a parish-church, sacred to St. Paul; a monastery of Præmonstratenses, dedicated to St. Michael; and a Dominican convent of the order of Mary, built by Bela the Fourth, which was completed in the year 1254.

It is to the history of this convent that the spot is indebted for its principal associations; and I shall give it as I received it from an intelligent and noble friend, to whom the episodes of her country's history are familiar as her household gods.

At the period of the invasion of the Monguls in 1240, the wife of King Bela, flying from these sanguinary hordes, took refuge with her two daughters, Margaret and Catherine, in Silesia, where she was unhappy enough to see them both expire. The elder princess had, a short time previously, lost her betrothed husband, William de Montferrat; but being tenderly attached to her mother, she had striven to conceal her anguish, until her heart broke in the effort. The Queen was pregnant at the time, and by the deathbed of her favourite daughter, she vowed her unborn

child, should it survive, to God. It proved to be a girl; and feeling that it had been sent in mercy to replace the loved one she had lost, she named it Margaret, in honour of the dead.

The devoted girl grew up; and far excelled her departed sister in both personal and mental endowments; indeed, so rare was her beauty, and so extraordinary her accomplishments, that many princes contended for her hand; and numerous were the appeals made to the Pope to release her from the maternal vow. But the young Margaret had been intrusted with a full knowledge of her destiny, and she believed that she had inherited from the piety of her mother a vocation for the cloister; and thus she looked coldly upon her lovers, and discouraged their suit, until, in the bloom of her age, on her return to Hungary, she entered, as Abbess, the convent of the Virgin, built by her father, taking with her eighteen noble ladies who were to form the sisterhood; among whom the most distinguished was her niece Elizabeth, the daughter of Stephen the Fifth.

On the occasion of her taking the veil, the Island was presented to her as a gift by her royal

father, and thenceforth bore her name. It is not known whether sickness, or longing for the world which she had left, withered the existence of the Royal Abbess; but it is certain that in 1271, she died in her 28th year, and was buried in the cemetery of the convent; and that her beloved brother Stephen V. after a short reign of two years, was interred at his own desire beside her.

So great was the sanctity of this royal recluse, that historians gravely assert, that when her nephew Ladislaus the Fourth, in 1275, then in his 15th year, lay mortally sick, tortured with delirium, and supposed to be in his last agony, abandoned by the faculty, and surrounded by the principal Magnates and monks of the country; while his aunts, Anna, the wife of Radislaw, Duke of Gallicia, and Sabina, wife of the Palatine Moys, his tutor and his nurse, stood weeping beside his bed; the veil of Margaret was sent by his sister Elizabeth from the convent, as a last hope; and was at once with speed and prayer flung over the dying youth by the Duchess Anna, when all his suite knelt down devoutly in the chamber to beseech a blessing on the relic.

The orison was answered—a profuse dew burst out on the brow and chest of the King, and he opened his eyes, and recognised the persons about him.

On his recovery Ladislaus went on a pilgrimage to the sepulchre of his miracle-working aunt; and urged her canonization, which was readily conceded by the Pope.

Nor is the Lady Margaret the only Hungarian Princess who has earned a place in the Saintly Calendar; for there is a melancholy tradition of the daughter of Andrew the Second, the father of Bela the Fourth, who at the age of five years was sent to Germany, to the guardianship of the family of the Landgravine of Tourage, to whose eldest son she was betrothed. At a very early age they were united, and in process of time had three daughters; but when the young Landgravine attained her 19th year, the Landgrave departed for the crusades, and being suddenly attacked with malignant sickness, died near Constantinople.

The widow's heart was bruised by this unlooked-for calamity; and from the hour that the

intelligence reached her, she assumed a monastic dress; and devoted herself entirely to works of charity. She sold her estates to assist the suffering; and eventually so impoverished herself that she was reduced to beg her way barefoot to the castle of her husband's brother and successor, by whom she hoped to be received; but he drove her from his door, refusing to her both shelter and help; and broken down by want, but full of faith and resignation, she died in the prime of life, and is revered as a saint both in Germany and Hungary.

The only relic save one of the race of Arpád now in existence is the small silver altar which the Princess Margaret used in her cell; it is at present in the possession of the Countess Vincent Batthyani, and is of very curious workmanship. The other is a spear, said to have belonged to Gaza the Second; but the authenticity of this latter *objet* is by no means unquestionable.

In 1203 a palace existed on the Margaret Island, in which King Emeric held his court; and it was afterwards inhabited by the young King Ladislaus, surnamed the Cumanian, when in 1272 he repudiated

his Queen Isabella, and imprisoned her in the Dominican Convent during three weary years.

Remnants of all these edifices yet remain upon the island, but with the exception of the convent, without one distinguishing feature; as during the sojourn of the Turks in Hungary, the Margaret Island was one of their favourite resorts, and everything was levelled which interfered with their peculiar ideas of convenience and expediency.

Thus, the ruin against which the *villarette* is built, is presumed to be that of the parish-church of St. Paul's, although no positive decision can be given; and another more extensive, and far more picturesque mass of fragments is supposed to be the remains of the Præmonstratense monastery. Of the site of the Maria Convent, however, there no longer exists a doubt, as the Prince-Palatine has caused immense excavations and clearings to be made, and laid bare the chapel, of which the proportions are very beautiful, although it is not extensive in its dimensions.

During the progress of the work the bodies of Margaret and her royal brother were disinterred; and on the head of the King was found a magni-

ficent circlet of gold, set with fine jewels, which is now in the cabinet of the Prince-Palatine at the Buda palace.

The excavations are still going on; and the whole chapel-vault is to be laid bare; after which the Archduke proposes to build a gothic church with the materials afforded by the ruin. There yet exist capitals, and portions of the shafts of columns, marble *bénétières*, and other fragments of a like description; the keystones of many of the arches are also available; and it is easy to distinguish the principal entrance of the chapel by the slab of well-worn marble which still occupies its original position between two ranges of mouldering walls of immense thickness. Sculls and bones are at present scattered on all sides; but they are to be ultimately collected and interred when the work is done. I was surprised to find one among them with the teeth as perfect as though it had been buried only a few years, instead of several centuries.

During the occupation of Buda, and indeed of the greater part of Hungary by the Turks, the defences of the Island against the encroachments of the

Danube were suffered to go to decay: the walls and dams were destroyed, and masses of the soil were carried away, which have greatly tended to diminish its extent. The ice has also left traces of its passage on the trees which fringe the shore; where, particularly during the fatal inundation of 1838, large limbs were actually sawn off by the rough edges of the vast sheets of ice, and most of the timber which impeded their progress was thoroughly stripped of its bark, and a great portion perished partially in consequence. Care is now taken to preserve the Island from further deterioration, but the destruction of the past century can never be repaired.

No traveller should quit the neighbourhood of Pesth without visiting this Palatinate Plaisaunce, if he love flowers, and birds, and sunshine, scattered over as sweet a spot as ever gemmed the bosom of a river; combined with historical and romantic associations enough to turn even the most sober pilgrim for the time being into a day-dreamer; and to exalt every enthusiast into a poet.

CHAPTER XIII.

PROMENADES AT PESTH—THE RÁKOS—JEWS' STREET—PROGRESS OF THE PLANTING—CITY OF DUST—THE LUDOVICIA—ITS PURPOSE—PATRIOTISM—AUSTRIAN INTERFERENCE—A PROJECT ABANDONED—THE MUSEUM—MINERALS—NATURAL PRODUCTIONS—FOSSIL REMAINS—MEDALS AND MODELS—NATIVE MANUFACTURES—LIBRARY—ANCIENT WEAPONS—CURIOUS SCULLS—PAINTINGS—GARDENS.

We had been told at Presburg that there were no public promenades at Pesth; and we were therefore comparatively delighted to find in the faubourg of the Stadtwäldchen one of the most charming drives and lounges imaginable; affording a new proof, had any been wanting, that where nature has been lavish to a country, the natives are ever discontented with all artificial efforts to produce landscape beauty.

The promenade of the Stadtwäldchen is a portion of the great plain of the Rákos, which joins

the vale of Mahadia, and forms the vast flat about Pesth, beyond which the Mafra mountains shut in the view. It is of considerable extent, well wooded, judiciously planted, and boasts among other beauties a lovely little island seated in a lake, and attained by a suspension bridge.

There are acacia avenues, and woods of beech and elm, forming an Hungarian Bois-de-Boulogne in miniature; delicious glimpses of the Danube; and afar off, the Buda mountains, looming out grandly against the horizon, and framing in the picture. Nor is this all; for the spot is still pointed out where the Diets were formerly held in the open air; and where the Magyar Magnates met on swift steeds, with sword on thigh, and sparkling with jewels, to legislate for a country which they had won with their good weapons, and to which they had given a constitution that was fated to outlive their independence as a nation.

There are, however, two drawbacks to this charming resort: the soil is one deep sand; and in order to reach it, it is necessary to traverse a street inhabited almost entirely by Jews, and consequently

unsavoury. Nevertheless it is not without its interest for the stranger, as nearly all the inscriptions above the several shops are written in Hebrew; and it is a curious trait of this swine-abhorring people, that several pork-butchers are to be found there. At the termination of this street is an avenue of horse-chestnut trees, hemmed in on either hand by pleasure-grounds and vineyards, containing gay little garden pavilions in the Italian taste, belonging to different noble families residing in the city; and between these the visitor to the Rákos pursues his way until he reaches the promenade itself, where a good restaurant, an octagonal dancing saloon, a theatrical arena, and a *montagne russe;* tilting at the ring, boating on the lake, and other *al-fresco* amusements, are provided for the pleasure-seeking public on all occasions of festival.

Seven-and-thirty years ago this lovely spot was a sandy desert, with here and there a group of trees; when it was decided by the Committee of Taste, which is entrusted with all the ornamental expenditure of the sister-cities, to convert it into a promenade; and the Archduke-Palatine (its Pre-

sident,) was requested to undertake the control and superintendence of the work, which he has done in a manner to confer a lasting obligation on their inhabitants. His passion for exotic timber, and his taste in its distribution, have rendered the Rákos one of the most delightful drives in Europe; which not even the nature of the soil has been able to destroy, although in very dry weather it necessarily detracts both from its beauty and its comfort.

There is yet a third place of public resort, situated about an English mile from Pesth, which is less frequented than it would otherwise be, from the fact that when the faubourg of the city is once passed, the whole road is one stretch of sand. It is nevertheless sufficiently interesting to render this inconvenience of minor importance: particularly as the same drawback exists to visiting all the environs of this otherwise beautiful city, which during the summer is so continually enveloped in dust, that it not only sweeps through the streets with every gust of wind, but actually drives down the current of the river like smoke; a fact which I found some difficulty in believing when

it was mentioned to me, but of which I was very disagreeably convinced when I first looked down upon it from a height. The Pesthians call their town "Little London," and it is certain that if our metropolis be the City of Fog, theirs is as undeniably the City of Dust.

Having passed this mile of deep sand, through which our horses laboured until they were covered with foam, we arrived at the Ludovicia; an immense quadrangular block of building, having an interior octagonal court, surrounded by stretches of noble windows, separated by pilasters, with bold capitals, of which the centres were formed by knights in armour.

This edifice was originally designed as a military college for the young Hungarian nobility; and was erected by a vote from the Diet, assisted by a donation from Queen Ludovica, the consort of Francis II., who on the occasion of her coronation as Sovereign of Hungary, when it is the custom of the nation to present a sum of money as a coronation gift, out of the £25,000 given, remitted 50,000 florins (£5000) as her contribution towards the completion of the college; and in com-

memoration of her munificence the Diet determined to name the building the Ludovicia.

Several of the Hungarian nobility also gave large sums in furtherance of the undertaking; and the Archduke-Palatine, ever ready to promote the honour and prosperity of the nation, made a donation of 10,000 florins.

So far, all went well; the building was erected; and although it is by no means handsome in its exterior, being a solid square totally devoid of ornament, it is nevertheless imposing from its extreme size, and the interior arrangements are faultless; the corridors are well lighted and spacious, the apartments of magnificent dimensions, and the staircases of red marble almost regal.

Thus much being accomplished, a patriotic individual of large fortune, Count Butler, volunteered a further donation of £5000 on condition that the whole education of the students should be carried on in the Hungarian language; and many of the Magnates came forward with large sums on the same understanding; while the Diet, anxious to further the work, voted 400,000 silver

florins for the immediate necessities of the establishment, which was to be opened within a few months.

The Government, however, at once opposed the wishes of the nation, and declared that the studies of the noble cadets should be pursued in German; an interference which so roused the indignation of the Hungarians, that the Magnates withheld their donations, and the Diet struck the deathblow of the institution by rescinding its princely vote, with the declaration that it would never lend its aid towards metamorphosing the young nobility of Hungary into German officers.

The Ludovicia therefore remains only as a monument of national enterprise, blighted on its very threshold. The vast edifice, with its spacious halls and echoing corridors, is cold and silent; and where the tread of many feet and the sound of many voices should have been heard from sunrise to sunset; where young hearts should have beat high, and noble spirits have been trained to honour, the spider and the bat are already tenanted.

I confess that a feeling of sadness stole over

me as we drove under the lofty portal into the interior court; and as the click of the sentry's musket, as he presented arms to the official friend by whom we were accompanied, rang sharp and clear through the silence. There is something very depressing in the aspect of a spacious building, complete in all its parts, with the freshness and the finish of yesterday, silent, empty, and desolate. To me it is far more melancholy than a ruin: there is a holiness about the hoary work of centuries: the mind falls back upon the past; the eye lingers over the moulder-ing walls, and crumbling mullions, and tottering towers; and the imagination peoples the cumbered space with stately visions; but there is a bleak, blank, bankrupt-look about the ambitious and abandoned pile of our own times, which imparts a discomfort that it is difficult to shake off.

And yet we saw the Ludovicia at a happy moment, for we visited it in order to inspect the *décombres* of the Pesth Museum; which had been removed thither until the new building de-stined for its reception should be erected; and thus at least a score of individuals were scattered

through the edifice, in the shape of guardians and soldiers.

The National Museum was founded by the late Count Francis Szechényi, who in 1802, presented to the country his fine library, and noble collection of Hungarian coins. His example was followed by several of his fellow Magnates; and the impetus once given, the collection was rapidly increased by donations from all parts of the kingdom. The land necessary for the erection of the Museum was also contributed; and the building was commenced, when the frightful inundation of 1838 overthrew for the moment all the arrangements of the authorities.

Many of the articles were injured, and others entirely destroyed by that fearful visitation; but, nevertheless, brief as the period of its existence had been, the Museum of Pesth is well worthy of a second visit, though the first may have extended to many hours' duration.

One large apartment had been appropriated to the minerals: and although numerically the collection cannot for an instant compete with that of Vienna, there are decidedly a few specimens in

the cabinets perfectly unrivalled. The opals are magnificent, and the amethysts and chalcedony the finest I ever saw. Masses of native gold from Kremnitz; pure silver from Selmecz; copper from Schmölnitz; coal from Orovitza and Fünfkirchen; and rock-salt from Transylvania, are among the many national productions in the mineralogical room; the marbles are also very beautiful and extremely various. The animals and birds contained in the next section of the Museum are all indigenous, like the minerals; and I was somewhat surprised to see among the latter a couple of ostriches, which I had great trouble in believing to be really of Hungarian origin: but I was assured that these birds are by no means uncommon in the *pusztas*, although they never grow to any great size. The collection of fungi in this apartment is more beautiful than any I ever saw.

The fossil remains are curious, and principally obtained from the beds of the Danube and Theiss: there are relics of many antediluvian animals, such as the mammoth, the rhinoceros, and the mastodon: and cave bones of bears, hyenas, and

other wild animals in profusion. There are also the sculls of two gigantic elephants, and a multitude of smaller skeletons.

A number of models occupy the lower end of the room, all executed by native workmen. I was particularly pleased with the beautiful appearance of a wheel, about eight feet in circumference, made of one solid block of wood. The nave, the staves, the tire, and even the heads of the nails were all produced with an accuracy really admirable, and it had the appearance of a highly-finished piece of workmanship, made in the usual manner. Models of draining, mining, and ventilating machines, railroad carriages, and artillery guns, were ranged along the shelves; and the collection prepared us for the interesting contents of the next apartment, which was entirely filled with specimens of Hungarian manufactures. It was a perfect bazār; there was gold-dust in crystal bottles, specimens of coarse woollen cloth, cutlery, silver plate, porcelain, glass, delf, and pottery; ladies' gloves and shoes, boots and bundas, like those worn by the peasantry; velvet caps embroidered with gold, swords and sword-belts; *rococo* trinkets, and articles for

a modern toilet: medicinal drugs, subtle essences, delicate perfumes, and deadly poisons. In short the vast room contained everything, from a fan to a frying-pan, from a doll to a dagger; all of the best workmanship which can be produced in the country, and forming by no means the least interesting feature of the Museum.

The Library was in sad confusion, for many of the books had been damaged by the inundation, and others were lying in piles for want of room to range them on the shelves; while to increase the disorder, the nation had just made a new purchase, consisting of several thousand volumes; and the huge cases in which they were packed were yet unopened. It is very rich in manuscripts, principally local and historical; the remains of an immense collection contributed by the different religious houses, and partially destroyed by the Turks. The philosophical and theological works predominate, but there are also many illuminated folios of great beauty and rarity, not only monastic but lyrical. Unfortunately the disorder was so great that it was impossible to examine them with either comfort or profit.

The Numismatic Cabinet is extremely interest-

ing, and is also purely national. The coins commence with St. Stephen, the first Hungarian King, and continue without break or intermission to the present reign. The medals are many of them curious. There are some remarkable ones struck by the rebel Count Tököly, where his own head appears in juxtaposition with that of his Moslem ally the Pasha, which are perhaps as well worthy of attention as any among them, although there are others of much greater beauty.

This cabinet is said, however, to be excelled by that of one of the Esterhazy family, whose baptismal name has escaped me, but who possesses a specimen of every coin and medal that has been struck in the country.

But to me the most interesting portion of the Museum was the collection of ancient weapons, many of which are historical. We found there the baton of Nicholas Palfy, the ivory-inlaid saddle of Louis the Second, on which he rode at the fatal battle of Mohács; the complete armour of Stephen Báthory, with its *rococo* ornaments; the sword and battle-axe of the Prince Rácotzi; a gigantic cross-hilted double-edged sword, five feet

in length, *said* to have belonged to one of the Arpáds; a variety of Hungarian Buzojányok, * many of them inlaid with gold, silver, or ivory; a number of ancient weapons of divers nations, studded with precious stones; Turkish daggers, scimitars, and pistols, of all shapes and sizes, taken at the recapture of Buda; and a short sword, perfectly unornamented, with an iron hilt, about a foot and a half long and four inches in width, with a couple of deep notches on one of its sharp edges, affirmed to be the weapon with which Mary Stuart was decapitated. I confess that I was incredulous, to the great annoyance of our cicerone; and, after all, if you suffer yourself to begin doubting in a cabinet of antiquities, you must end by general disbelief, which can advantage no one, and which meanwhile destroys a host of associations.

The same room contained, however, two remains of the "good old times," with regard to which there could be no doubt; and I shall not readily

* A tremendous weapon, consisting of a short handle of hard wood, headed by a heavy ball of iron, either notched or wrought in ridges, so as to produce an irregular surface.

forget the horror that I felt on seeing them. They were two human sculls, with the upper and lower jaws fastened together by a rude padlock of iron! In one of them the instrument of torture had rusted away the teeth against which it pressed, but in the other they were perfect. There could be no deception, for the padlock could not be removed from either without breaking away the bone; and although I had before heard of this dreadful method of destroying life, I had never brought myself to believe in such demon-like cruelty until I was compelled to do so by inspecting these terrible memorials of past ages; found, as I was informed, in one of the dungeons of Buda.

There are a few fine paintings in the Museum, and a great number which are very *médiocres*. Among the former are a lovely Holy Family by Raphaël, in which the Mother is perfectly angelic: a fine set of portraits of the Rácotzi family, consisting of his own head, which is the very *beau-idéal* of that of a patriot chieftain, and those of his wife, a beautiful and stately woman, (very much in the style of Marie Antoinette,) his father, and his son.

There are also two small equestrian pictures in oil of Maria Theresa and her husband, by an unknown hand, which are chiefly remarkable for the extraordinary finish of their detail; the former is in her coronation robes as Queen of Hungary; and you feel quite satisfied as you examine it, that the conscientious artist has not omitted a curl of her hair, a fold of her drapery, or even a pearl of her garniture. Her royal partner has precisely the characterless expression of countenance which one looks to find there: he is what the French call *le mari de sa femme*, and nothing more.

There is an immense portrait of Archbishop Szechényi, the grandfather of the present Counts of that name, and founder of the family; and another of his son, the Count Francis, who originated the Museum; both of which are well executed, as are also some others of greater antiquity.

Had the collection been arranged and catalogued, we should doubtlessly have found many objects of interest besides those which I have enumerated; but as it had merely been conveyed to

the Ludovicia *pro tempore*, during the erection of the edifice intended for its reception, it was impossible to examine it with such accuracy as would enable me to give a perfect idea of it as a whole.

On leaving the Ludovicia, we drove round to the gardens which are attached to it, and which are extremely spacious and well arranged. Good succession houses, covered walks, smooth lawns, and gay parterres, combine to give them both beauty and variety. They formerly belonged to the noble family of Orczy who disposed of them to the nation for 140,000 florins, a large sum of money, a portion of which they remitted, as their contribution towards the establishment. The façade of the building on this side has infinitely more grandeur than that which faces the road; and, were it not that the arenaceous nature of the soil tends to weaken the luxuriance of the greensward, and to destroy the beauty of the walks, I should be tempted to number the gardens of the Ludovicia among the most beautiful that I have ever seen.

Altogether, we were delighted with our visit;

and should the building ever be put to its legitimate use, I venture to predict to the stranger who may be induced to encounter the sandy road by which it is approached, one of the most interesting days that he will spend in Hungary.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HUNGARIAN PUSZTAS — HERDS OF CATTLE — FORESTS—INFLUENCE OF THESE WASTES ON THE NATIONAL CHARACTER—FOREST OF BAKONY—BANDITTI —HOW RECRUITED—HARDY DEPREDATIONS.

THERE are immense tracts of country in Hungary totally uncultivated, and almost entirely sterile, which require only the labour of man to render them a source of national prosperity.

The first of these are the *pusztas;* vast plains, or deserts, or prairies, sweeping away for leagues; and only partially available even as pastures for the enormous droves of cattle, swine, and sheep, which wander over them in thousands, and gather a scant and meagre existence from the soil, where it yields in patches a rank and unsavoury vegetation.

It has been calculated that if these far-reaching *pusztas* could be brought into cultivation,

their produce alone would suffice to afford subsistence to eight millions of souls, and thus Hungary could support fifty millions of population out of her own natural riches.

The monotony of these deserts, which are many of them one continuous and deep sand, is relieved only by the droves of half-wild cattle to which I have just alluded, guarded by serfs and dogs very little more civilized than themselves. All the public roads from Lower Hungary to Vienna are thronged with oxen for the markets of the hereditary Austrian provinces, which draw their supply almost entirely from this country. The animals are small and lean, a fact easily accounted for by the perpetual exercise necessitated by the extensive nature of their pastures, and the paucity of the vegetation. They are usually of a dun colour, with black legs, and immense horns. Buffalos are also to be found in the *pusztas*, as well as horses; and the pigs, which are bred originally in Servia, are considered to be as fine as any in the world.

The sheep are poor-looking, diminutive animals, kept entirely for their wool; the Hungarians

scarcely ever making use of mutton, to which they are not partial. These multitudinous droves form the only moving feature of the plains; and no traveller can have gone down the Danube without being struck by their appearance, as they descend in thousands to the edge of the river.

Another great mean of wealth are the gigantic primeval forests, into many of whose fastnesses the foot of man has never penetrated; and which, were they converted into an engine of national industry, would suffice to supply the whole Austrian monarchy with fuel. To render them available, however, Hungary must possess good roads, and numerous canals; for at present there would be no possibility of transporting heavy loads through the country; and there is no immediate prospect of their formation. The wants of the population are comparatively few, and the supply superabundant; and thus not only the forests remain intact, but little labour is bestowed even upon the corn-land, which yields its produce with very slight demands on human exertion; and agriculture is consequently very imperfectly practised. It is only where a dense population requires a comparative

supply, that the earth is compelled to yield up its produce by perseverance and art; and much prolific land lies comparatively waste in Hungary, because there is no necessity for great exertion.

The mighty forests are a more grand and stately feature of the soil; they are vast, dark, and almost impenetrable; majestic elms, immense beeches, and umbrageous oaks, intermingled with the birch, and the ash, and carpeted by a dense underwood, opening at intervals into a grassy glade, extend for several hundred miles, shutting out the sunlight, and seeming to defy the intrusion of mankind. To the influence of these aboriginal forests, to their majesty, their freedom, and their solitude, may probably be traced many of the fierce and haughty qualities of the peasantry who inhabit their outskirts; and who naturally become half woodsman and half freebooter, as circumstances may serve to develope their natural character.

One of the most extensive forests in the kingdom is that of Bakony, which traverses more than a dozen counties, many of them the most highly-cultivated, and the most thickly-populated in

Hungary; viz., Oedenburg, Eisenburg, Szala, Fejervármezye (Weissenburg), Veszprém, Somágy, &c. Some parts of this mighty wood are so thickly grown as to appear impervious to the tread; while others are comparatively open, affording pasture for the droves of swine, and flocks of sheep, which feed there; and interspersed with the rude huts of the shepherd and the swine-herd, and the solitary inns which alone offer refuge to the occasional traveller; and whose owners, half robber and half landlord, are probably quite as much to be feared as the more declared banditti of the forest.

Here and there a small hamlet rises along the lip of the leafy solitude, but they are rare and rude; and the pilgrim must have a light heart and an empty purse who lingers among them from a mere love of the picturesque; for the Bakony bears no peaceful reputation, having long been the haunt of numerous bands of free-woodsmen, as bold if not as gay as Robin Hood himself.

These banditti are generally composed of deserters from the army, disgusted with Austrian discipline, and German rule; but as opportunity

makes thieves, their strength is constantly reinforced by peasant volunteers. A disappointment in love, or a reverse of fortune, leading to suicide in France, or to misanthropy with us, throws the Hungarian serf into one or other of the robber-bands of the forest; and the mystery and romance by which they are surrounded render them preferable to either in the eyes of a brave race.

But who shall classify or even define the causes which may impel the young or the despairing to join these forest outlaws? The *real* motives and impulses of a score of banditti would probably furnish forth such a romance as the brains of all the book-makers in Europe never engendered! A medley of ferocity and carelessness, of chivalry and baseness, of practical humour and reckless cruelty, would supervene; and the world would pause with wonder over a page of human life such as it never looked to contemplate. A few pages have from time to time been rent from this wild volume, and spread forth to startle the tame matter-of-fact inhabitants of the cities, who have hung over them in wonder; but the great bulk is still unread, and will probably continue so

until the vast forest-fastnesses bow beneath the touch of time, and their bold tenants are no more.

Meanwhile, there is every reason to believe that the drovers and shepherds of these wooded countries have generally a good understanding with the forest bands, to whom they give information which is not always very beneficial to the travelling merchants who are conveying their goods from one county to another. The master of the cattle exacts from his drover that none of them shall stray, and attaches a penalty to their loss; and to enable him the more readily to fulfil these very difficult conditions, the peasant forms an alliance with the band of the neighbourhood, serving the brigands when the occasion offers: affording any stray member of the community the shelter of his hut when he apprehends pursuit: and, in short, protecting the property committed to his charge, at the expense of that of his fellow-beings, when it chances to be coveted by his patrons.

Nor is the serf the only tool of the freebooters: nor his goodwill their only exterior dependence;

for the *bocskaros nemesek*, or small proprietor, whose farm may lie within reach of a foray, is compelled to be equally complaisant if he desire to escape robbery and incendiarism.

In Lower Hungary, during the winter months, it is a common practice with these *soi-disant Szegény Legény* (poor fellows!) to start off a dozen at a time to the isolated château of a noble; to remain there for three or four days, keeping the cellar and the kitchen in constant requisition, and then to take their departure, without any attempt on the part of their self-elected hosts to detain or molest them. They put their faith in the density of their forests, and in the thinly-peopled solitudes which surround them; knowing full well that the imperfect police is unable to interfere; and that no landed proprietor, be his rank what it may, will venture to denounce them, and to draw down upon his own head the vengeance of the band.

CHAPTER XV.

SOBRI, THE BANDIT-CHIEF—HIS YOUTH—HIS BRAVERY —THE SHEPHERD AND HIS MASTER—THE EXPEDITION—THE YOUNG FARMER—THE PEASANT-ARMY—MILPAIT—THE FARMER MISKA—THE ROBBER-GUESTS —THE THREAT—THE WIFE—THE FOREST-SEEKER—THE RENCONTRE—THE BIVOUAC OF THE BAND—THE SPOKESMAN—THE APPARITION—THE COMPACT—THE MAGNATE'S FEAST—SOBRI AT SUPPER—THE YOUNG COUNTESS—ROBBER-GALLANTRY—A MARCH TO BAKONY—THE TROOP SURPRISED—DEATH OF SOBRI—THE FIGHT—THE TWO FUGITIVES—THE BURNING HUT—A SCAFFOLD JEST.

THE most celebrated robber-chief of modern times in Hungary, was a man named Sobri, the son of a shepherd of the county of Sopron, (Oedenburg,) in the service of a landed proprietor called Prusinczky. His father, anxious to give him an opportunity of improving his condition, instead of making him his companion in the

fields, sent him to school immediately that his age permitted him to do so; but the young Sobri had no taste for study. The woods were his books, and their recesses the pages over which he loved to pore. Even as a boy he loathed the authority beneath which he writhed; and as a youth he spurned it. Handsome in person, his vanity whispered to him soft tales to which he listened with a willing ear; high of heart, he never heard of any daring deed that he did not burn to rush upon its fellow; and brave as a lion, he never cared to remember that there would be danger in the path he longed to tread.

He was barely on the threshold of manhood, when, disgusted with the flocks and herds by which his father was surrounded, he seized his rifle, and plunged into the recesses of the forest of Bakony, where, as the result proved, he was received with welcome.

Ere long the adventures of the band with which he had allied himself became more daring and more romantic. The peasant with his little wicker waggon filled with the produce of his land, was never molested; the traveller was occasionally

lightened of his purse and his pistols, but never personally injured. It was the merchants, and particularly the Jews, to whom the robbers were the most formidable. In a couple of years a whisper got abroad that Sobri had become the captain of the troop; and numerous questions and remonstrances were addressed to his father, who declared very frankly that the circumstance was probable enough, but that it was idle to complain to him, as he had not the slightest influence over the actions of his son.

The depredations of the robbers became at length so frequent and so serious, that it was found necessary to make some effort to capture or disperse them; and as their numbers were not supposed to amount to more than thirty men, one hundred armed peasants and a troop of mounted soldiers were put upon their track, without any misgiving on the part of the authorities that they could possibly fail in their undertaking.

"Your son is a lost man;" said Prusinczky to his shepherd, as he watched the departure of the little army, which after passing through the village, took its way towards the forest; "If they

had the devil for their captain instead of Sobri, the band could never make head against such odds as those."

The shepherd was silent.

"I should like to have seen the lad;" pursued the farmer after a pause, as he continued to follow with his eyes the progress of the military; "but it is all over with him now."

The father turned away abruptly; his reflections were probably painful.

During three days the occasional report of fire-arms had been heard in the forest, but nothing was known of the result of the expedition; and meanwhile the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages pursued their daily avocations, fondly nursing the hope that they should be freed ere long from all fear of the brigands.

Prusinczky had several oxen for sale, but as sellers are far more rife than buyers in Hungary, he had been long vainly looking for a purchaser; when one morning his shepherd came to him accompanied by a respectable young farmer, strongly built, and of middling stature, who was travelling the country for the purpose of buying cattle. His

father had just installed him in a small farm, and provided him with a wife, but the oxen which were on the land were unequal to the labour, and he was willing to pay a good price if he found any for sale which suited him.

This was precisely the description of customer that Prusinczky required; the cattle were all passed in review; and ultimately the young farmer fixed upon the best yoke of oxen on sale, and paid down ten florins as bargain-money until the morrow, when he was to return, and bring with him his peasant to drive them home.

This affair concluded, the two farmers dined together; talked over the expedition against the brigands, speculated very sagely on the probable fate of Sobri, discussed the state of the crops, the price of wool, and the gossip of the neighbourhood, and ultimately parted satisfied with each other. But at sunset on the morrow the oxen were still unclaimed, a fact which greatly surprised Prusinczky, who held the bargain-money of the purchaser; another day passed, and another, and they were yet in his own possession; until the transaction struck him as so singular that he

mentioned it to his shepherd, who smiled quietly in reply, as he assured him that the deposit was not likely to be reclaimed, nor the cattle taken away; the young farmer who had dined with him being no other than Sobri himself, who was again at the head of his band, amusing himself by harassing the party which had gone out to take him.

The prettiest girls of the villages deserted to the forests; the richest ladings of the travelling traders followed them; the name of Sobri became a proverb throughout the country: other bands started up in other countries; and the free-woodsmen became ultimately so formidable, that no less than thirty thousand peasants from time to time took arms in the vicinity of the Bakony, assisted by reinforcements of military, both horse and foot, in order to destroy them. But the banditti knew all the recesses of the forest too well to be easily made the prey of an external force, whatever its amount; and even when a chance spy had betrayed their neighbourhood, and that they were supposed to be surrounded in one of their strongholds, they committed the most fearless

robberies within the circle formed by their pursuers, as if to set them at defiance, while they remained unmolested.

On one occasion two of a troop, commanded by a peasant named Milfait, who was the lieutenant of Sobri, presented themselves at twilight at the threshold of a small proprietor, whose farm stood within the county of Oedenburg, and demanded money and ammunition. Miska, the farmer, was esteemed one of the boldest men and best hunters in the country, and he resolutely refused to give them either; the robbers insisted with great violence, and threatened him with death if he did not comply with their demands, but their loud words produced no effect; and as Sobri had always denounced bloodshed save in self-defence, they contented themselves with threatening to return ere long and burn his house over his head.

Miska had a wife who was by no means so stouthearted as himself; and often in the watches of the night did she start from her sleep, and raising herself on her pillow, listen to the wind as it swept over the puszta, or to the scream of some wild bird as it winged its way across the dreary

waste in search of prey, believing that she heard the voice and the tread of the banditti; but for a time nothing more occurred to arouse her fears, and she was just beginning to forget them, when one day that her husband was absent on his avocations, the same fierce visitors again entered the cottage, and enquired for its owner.

The trembling woman informed them that he had been from home since the previous day, and that the period of his return was uncertain; but her compulsory guests would not yield credence to her tale, until they had assured themselves of the fact by searching every room in the house; when, satisfied that the farmer was really not to be found, they returned to the kitchen, and laying aside their rifles, made a hearty supper at his expense, criticising the quality of his wine, and the nature of his viands, and complimenting the terrified wife on her skill in cookery.

Ere their meal ended the twilight had gathered over the puszta like a pall, and blotted out the distant outline of the forest; and when they resumed their rifles to depart, they bade their hostess remember the supper which they had

shared with her, as she would never again partake of one with her husband; and as they spoke, they struck the locks of their guns with a significant gesture, and walked slowly away.

The unhappy woman followed them with her eyes until their figures were lost in the gloom, without moving a limb; and when they disappeared she sank upon her knees, and prayed as those only pray whose whole soul is upon their lips. In this attitude her husband found her at day-dawn, with the door of the cottage open, and the cold damp air of the plain sweeping unheeded over its narrow floor. His welcome was a shrill cry of joy, which rang out wild and loud as she sprang to his neck and hung there with frantic delight; and when he had calmed her with kind words she told her tale, and a strange fire flashed from the eyes of Miska, and the blood mounted to his brow.

"Fool!" laughed the bold hunter; "to be scared by a few loud words! But I may one day find you dead from sheer fright if this silly game is suffered to go on. And so I am never to sit down to my own board again! If they be not

better woodsmen than they are seers, Sobri has made a bad bargain in adding them to his band. How now, Gábor!" he cried, addressing a peasant who had entered with him; "Give me my bunda which I have just put off; the blast is bleak on the puszta, and I am off for Bakony."

"For Bakony!" echoed the wife and the serf simultaneously.

"Aye, for Bakony. Am I a child that these vagabonds should amuse themselves at my expense? I will teach them to know me better."

"Nay, but Miska, my dear Miska;" almost shrieked his wife; but he heeded her not; and as he passed the threshold, the peasant Gábor swung his own bunda over his shoulders, and muttering to himself; "If he will e'en go, he shall at least not go alone;" snatched up his gun, and without further parley, followed swiftly on the footsteps of his master.

The sun was just rising over the plain; and he who has not seen a sunrise in the desert, can form no idea of the magnificence of this phenomenon in the Hungarian puszta; but the angry farmer bestowed no thought on the glorious scene

around him: his eye was fixed on the distant forest which fringed the horizon, or followed the flight of the vulture and the eagle that sailed over his head, as he strode onward through the deep sand, yet moist with the night-dew. Once or twice he glanced back at his follower, half amused and half irritated at his companionship; but he apparently did not consider the circumstance worthy of comment, for they walked forward briskly for a couple of hours without exchanging a word.

As they neared the forest, however, the farmer became more cautious, and taking a transverse direction, he gained its outskirts at a considerable distance from the point where he expected to find the robbers. Their progress was impeded by a thick growth of underwood, garlanded together by the fantastic wreaths of the wild vine, which entangled their feet, and trammelled their movements; and occasionally Miska paused and listened earnestly, as he sent a long and searching look in all directions through the forest.

Suddenly the light of a distant fire was reflected on the boles of the trees, and on the dense

foliage, as it flashed up at intervals; and then subsided into a ruddy glow that turned the dim recess into a cavern of topaz; and while Miska and his faithful follower cautiously crept forward the sounds of merry laughter came to their ears. Still they moved on, but slowly, stealthily, like men who know that they are on an errand of life and death; and eventually the hardy hunter found himself within a few yards of a score of the band, headed by their lieutenant Milfait. They were sitting or lying idly round the fire, with their pistols in their belts, and their rifles on the ground beside them.

Their costume was a mixture of the common garb of the country, and a showy attempt at ornament, more picturesque than judicious. Most of them wore the tight pantaloon adopted by the Hungarian grenadiers; and all of them were furnished with a bunda, upon which they were seated, or in which they were enveloped. The large broad-flapped hats of a few were elaborately decorated with eagles' or herons' feathers, and long streamers of coloured ribbons; and the caps of Astracan fur adopted by others were similarly

ornamented. Their weapons were universally of the most costly description; and their braided jackets and laced waistcoats were half national, half dramatic; while their long flowing hair, thick beards, and enormous mustachios, gave a character to their appearance perfectly consonant with their profession.

Half a dozen gourds filled with wine were circulating among the group; and as Miska stood, screened by the bole of an enormous beech, and looking upon the wild and romantic wood-scene which I have attempted to describe, he found that one of the revellers was amusing his comrades with an account of his visit to the cottage on the plain.

At times the man who had been his companion, and who lay with his head pillowed on his bunda, interposed a few words in explanation of the tale, and apparently with considerable effect, for his interpolations were generally followed by a peal of laughter.

At length the merry wight sprang from the earth, and stood within four yards of the attentive farmer. He was a stout-built man, of immense

muscle, the readiest with a jest or a blow of any of the band; and perhaps also the aptest with both.

"Our pretty hostess turned out a *praprika* chicken* as well as any cook in Pesth;" he said as he stretched himself listlessly, as if to relieve his limbs; "and she has the blackest eye and the lightest foot in Sopron; but as for Miska himself he is a craven,—a coward,—or he would long ago have taken to the woods; and were he to cross my path I would strike him down like a froward hound, were it only to revenge the craft!" and as he spoke he lifted his bony arm, and made the gesture of one who deals out a heavy blow.

"Strike then, braggart!" cried a voice close at his elbow; and ere any hand could clutch a weapon, Miska stood beside the robber, with his eyes flashing a proud defiance. "Strike!" he repeated still more boldly, as he glanced round upon the band, who had sprung to their feet at this unexpected apparition; "Beat down the craven and the coward, who better liked to be an honest peasant than a hunted bandit—if you can!"

* Chicken stewed with the red pepper common to the country; a favourite national dish.

A murmur of mingled wonder and admiration was the only answer.

"I have come among you," pursued the undaunted farmer; "to prove that I am not a man to brook the idle follies of empty jesters who love better to brawl than fight. Fie upon you! Did you become the followers of Sobri only to make war on women? A German or a Sclave could do as much—and you call yourselves Magyars! You all know me—I am Miska; and I swear that the first man among you who crosses my threshold during my absence shall have a bullet in his brain, for I am no bad marksman; and I am likely, craven and coward though I be, to keep my word better than the proud boaster who was to have felled me to his feet!"

As he spoke he clutched the arm of the astounded robber with a grasp of iron; and so bewildered were the band by the bold daring of his spirit that not an effort was made to injure him.

"Miska;" said Milfait, as he approached the farmer: "forget that you have cause of quarrel with the free-woodsmen. You are a gallant fellow, and worthy of your Hungarian blood. The

Bakony shall henceforth be as safe for you as the Joseph-platz in Vienna. Only pledge yourself not to molest the followers of Sobri, and trust to their honour for the rest."

It were needless to pursue the anecdote. Miska drank a health to the band from one of their own gourds; summoned his trembling follower to his side from his sylvan, but not over-safe retreat; and just as the gloaming again fell over the puszta, was once more on his way to his terror-stricken wife, who thenceforth never entertained a couple of bandits during the absence of her husband.

But the robbers did not content themselves with visiting the small farms of the puszta; they occasionally became more ambitious, and presented themselves in the châteaux of the nobles: and so cleverly did they arrange their plans that they seldom failed in carrying off all the portable property of their hosts.

An admirable story is told of Sobri, who on one occasion received information that a Magnate possessing an estate in one of the counties touching on the Bakony was about to celebrate a family

festival, and to assemble a host of high-born and high-dowried friends. Sobri at once felt that such an opportunity was not to be neglected, and he commenced operations by furnishing a score of his troop with the local costume of the Comitat in which the château stood.

This done, he introduced them one or two at a time into the village, and thence they wandered to the outskirts of the Baron's estate; a few scaled the walls and busied themselves in the offices: others joined the musicians and dancers; while Sobri, whom constant success had rendered fearless, boldly entered the building, and amid the confusion and hilarity that prevailed,—a confusion and a hilarity augmented in no slight degree by the crowd of servants, belonging no one knew to whom, and whom it would have been considered uncourteous and inhospitable to catechise, even had there been time to do so,—penetrated even to the dining-room.

Sobri, had he been born a century or two sooner, and of gentle blood, would have been a *preux chevalier* of the first order: but alas! he had only come into the world in the nineteenth century as

the son of a poor shepherd, and although certainly *sans peur*, he was very far from being *sans reproche*.

Time wore on; the peasants who had been dancing in the hall slowly dispersed, and returned to the village. Such of the musicians as had not partaken too freely of the Baron's vintage followed them, while the remainder rolled themselves in their bundas, and slept as though there was to be no morrow to their night of revelry. The firmest-footed serving-man began to fail, borne down by good wine and over zeal; and the loud mirth of the ruder guests was hushed; while the more chastened enjoyment of the "fair women and brave men" in the Baron's banquet-hall was at its height, when Sobri gave the signal which was to rally his band about him; and approaching the lady of the house made a profound inclination as he announced himself, drew a pistol from his bosom, pointed to a score of his followers who blocked up the doorway, and requested the guests not to disturb themselves as no violence was meditated.

He then proceeded to clear the table of all the

plate which was scattered over it, while the guests sat by quite unable to interfere; he relieved the ladies of their diamonds, and the gentlemen of their gold neck-chains; and having satisfied himself that there remained nothing more in the dining saloon which he could conveniently carry off, he left a sufficient guard to prevent any of the company from attempting to give an alarm; and proceeded with a few of his followers to ransack the house.

The booty thus obtained was so satisfactory that Sobri felt that as a man of gallantry he could not depart for the forest without paying his compliments to the host, and offering his adieus to the guests; and accordingly he returned to the dining-room where the company were still seated, awaiting with considerable anxiety the termination of the adventure.

Withdrawing his hat with great deference on the threshold of the apartment, he advanced towards the table, and took his leave, apologizing for having in some degree disturbed the progress of the feast, and wishing the company a renewal of appetite to conclude it.

The thing was altogether so tragi-comic, that a fair young countess who had probably not been a very severe loser by the incursion of the brigands, yielding to the feeling of amusement which the romance of the adventure had afforded to her, replied to his address with a smile; "We thank you for your good wishes, Mr. Sobri; but you have yourself prevented their accomplishment, for not a soul at table, I believe, has ever tried to eat with his fingers, and you have left us no other alternative."

"Your ladyship has reason;" said the bandit; "and sooner than permit so fair and so courteous a lady as yourself to suffer inconvenience, I will intrude my presence on the company for five minutes longer"—and turning to one of his followers, who was laden with the plate which had been removed from the dinner-table, he began systematically to replace all the articles, until each guest was provided with the necessary means of continuing his meal; when once more bowing politely to the assembled company, and begging permission to kiss the hand of the lively young Countess, he withdrew followed by his men, carefully mak-

ing fast every door through which they passed, in order to retard the pursuit which they had every reason to apprehend.

But the palmy days of the band were not to endure for ever; their constant impunity eventually made them reckless; and they became a serious scourge to the whole of Lower Hungary. The extent of the wide forest enabling them to appear in several distant points almost simultaneously, and seeming in the eyes of the superstitious to endow them with ubiquity, rendered their capture an affair of great difficulty; and their knowledge of the locality enabled them to bring down with their unerring rifles numbers of their pursuers, while they themselves remained undiscovered.

Such being the case it was ultimately decided that success could only be secured by surrounding the forest with a cordon of peasants assisted by a regiment of cavalry; and the corps selected for this service were the Hulans or Polish Lancers.

The civil force amounted to nearly 90,000 men, for a smaller number would have been totally inadequate; and the expedition started with high

hopes of accomplishing their difficult and dangerous mission.

Weeks passed, and save one or two stragglers who had evidently been detached by the brigands as scouts, and who were at once picked off by the rifles of the peasantry, no traces were discovered of the band; but as time wore on, the soldiers became weary of continual disappointment; and finding their horses a serious impediment to their progress through the Bakony, they left them on the outskirts of the forest, and plunged into the recesses of the leafy wilderness.

Ere long, the traces of recent fires, and the fragments of many a hasty meal, sometimes abandoned ere it was half terminated, served as guides to the soldiers in their pursuit of the robber band; which was evidently retreating before them in scattered parties. Occasionally a few rapid shots were heard: some detachments of the banditti in endeavouring to evade the military had come in contact with the peasantry, and had either been shot or made prisoners.

But at length the retreat of Sobri himself was

discovered, and by an admirable and careful manœuvre the bandits were completely and hopelessly surrounded before they became aware of their danger. There was no possibility of escape, for as Sobri had only retained about him a few of his favourite followers, the soldiers were five to one, and being all armed to the teeth resistance would have been mere madness, and a wanton waste of life.

"Keep back your men;" shouted the brigand-chief to the officer in command, as he discovered that his situation was desperate; "We know that we cannot hope to escape, and therefore it were idle to take each other's lives in a vain struggle. I am Sobri; and you have now only to return to your employers and tell them that I died as I had lived, defying their power!"

As he spoke he placed a pistol to his mouth, drew the trigger, and fell a disfigured corse in the midst of his followers. The rest of the party did not however imitate his example; they fought like wild beasts, and were not totally destroyed until they had killed a considerable number of their enemies. But at length the last bandit bit the

dust; and the soldiers ere they left the forest dug two trenches, in one of which they deposited the bodies of their dead comrades, and in the other those of the banditti.

Great doubt, nevertheless, existed in the minds of the authorities that the self-murdered man was really Sobri; and the impression was strengthened by the information that two of the band had succeeded in making their escape from the forest, and had been seen traversing the plain in the direction of a cattle-shed apart from any village.

It was immediately decided that one of these men must be Sobri, for he had so long borne a charmed life that even the wisest of the reasoners seemed to think it impossible that if any individual had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of their pursuers the chief himself should have failed to do so. The uncertainty was however terminated by the shepherd of Prusinczky, who having been conducted to the spot where the brigands were interred, and whence they were exhumed, swore to having recognised the body of his son by a mark upon the right shoulder which had been there since his birth.

It was truly Sobri, who had himself terminated his existence rather than be subjected to the ignominy and exposure of a public execution; and nothing therefore remained to be done save to capture the two fugitives already alluded to, and to give them up, along with the prisoners already taken, to the municipal authorities.

But these men, profiting by the example of their chief, and driven to desperation by the hopelessness of their position, had barricadoed themselves into the rude building of which they had taken possession; and being well provided with ammunition, kept up such a rapid and continuous fire upon their besiegers, that these latter who were exposed to the shots of their hidden assailants, fell in every direction; and the survivors at length determined to set fire to the shed, and thus possess themselves of the persons of the bandits.

The attempt was instantly made; the timber of which the building was composed ignited like tinder, and the retreat of the robbers was soon one fierce pyramid of fire; but amid the crackling of the flames two sharp shots were heard; and

once more justice was defrauded of her due. The burning shed was the funeral pile of the robbers; and having assured themselves of the fact, the victorious peasantry dispersed, satisfied that for some time to come at least, they were freed from all fear of the bandits.

Let none fancy that I have been here raking up old-world tales with which to entertain my readers, for Sobri has been dead only a few months; and the individuals of his band who were taken and executed did not belie the character of their comrades, but died with a courage almost amounting to indifference.

It is said that the hand of the executioner having been unsteady, as he was in the act of securing the cord round the throat of one of the prisoners, he was jeered by the criminal for his want of nerve; "You are too good to tremble because you are arranging my last cravat;" said the fearless ruffian; "but your tenderness is thrown away upon me; for I swear to you that were we to change positions, I would do as much for *you* without the quiver of a muscle."

And thus terminated the band of Sobri, amount-

ing in all, it is believed, only to about sixty persons; who before they could be destroyed put an army of upwards of 90,000 men into movement, and that too in the nineteenth century.

It is not to be supposed that the race of bandits is altogether extinct in Hungary, although it is certain that the depredations now committed are rare and unimportant: but so long as Bakony shall continue in its present primeval state, and the country remain in its comparatively lawless condition, the mighty forest is as little likely to exist without its leaves as without its free woodsmen.

CHAPTER XVI.

STATE OF HUNGARY—MIXED POPULATION—NATIONAL JEALOUSIES—AUSTRIAN POLICY—THE CITIES—HUNGARIAN TROOPS—THE NOBLE HUNGARIAN GUARD—THE DIET OF 1825—NATIONAL AGITATION—THE PRESENT DIET—THE POLITICAL DELINQUENTS—DEMAND OF A PARTY—POSITION OF THE CITIES—NATIVES AND COLONISTS—THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE—PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS EXTENSION—ROTTEN BOROUGHS.

THE state of Hungary was probably never, during a period of peace, in so interesting a position as at the present time. It is so differently constituted in many respects from any other European country, that it presents a social study as exciting as it is intricate. At the first glance it is impossible for a stranger to seize the many and mingled shades of its complicated organization; nor are any, save the most intelligent of the natives, able to give the right end by which the skein may be unravelled.

It is easy to understand that Hungary, like every other nation, has her population divided into high aristocracy, minor nobles, citizens, and peasantry; but what renders it peculiar in its constitution is the fact that although its nobility are almost entirely genuine Magyars, the peasantry are a combination of Hungarians, Swabians, Sclavonians, Illyrians, Germans, Bohemians, Wallachians, Russians, Croatians, Greeks, and even Frenchmen and Italians; one colony of the latter and three of the former, actually existing at the present day in the neighbourhood of the Banat; and its citizens (by which I mean the merchants and traders of the cities, and the municipal officers) are a mixture of all these, with the addition of a great number of Jews. I have heard the total amount of this latter people, now settled in Hungary and Transylvania, estimated at eighty thousand; and it is certain that there are at least five thousand residing in Buda and Pesth alone.

Nor is this the only extraordinary feature of Hungarian population. Each people has colonised in turn, and made, so to express it, a *bivouac* in the country, which has gradually grown into inhabitation; as for instance, when the Magyars

conquered the Sclavonians, and drove them to the frontiers of Austria, Poland, and Moravia, they brought with them a few Russians, whose descendants still exist in the country; the Sclaves colonized where they were permitted to settle; then the Swabians were also compelled to retreat towards Austria; and ultimately distinct settlements of Wallachians, Croatians, and even Bohemians, established themselves, each retaining its own habits, dialect, and costume; and even yet the Germanism of many parts of the kingdom is not subdued by the more legitimate Hungarianism.

The land of the Magyar is still a Babel; where many varying and conflicting interests and languages, the one perfectly unintelligible to the other, tend to prevent that unity of purpose and of feeling, which is strength as well with nations as with families.

The Government in its different phases is also an anomaly: for the King is German; and yet the little diplomatic power that exists in the country is in the hands of the high native aristocracy and minor nobles.

In order to strengthen and consolidate her

interests in Hungary, Austria formerly attempted to amalgamate this jarring and heterogeneous mass into one consistent whole, and to give to it a distinctively German character. But the accomplishment of her purpose was as impossible as its desire was politic. It was natural that an Empire, having become possessed of a neighbouring nation through the agency of its own civil feuds, should endeavour to reduce its conquest to such a constitution as should ensure its perpetual dependence; the interests of that Empire itself required this line of policy: but it was equally to be expected that a brave and free people, hitherto accustomed to their own monarch and their own laws, would peril everything to retain at least a portion of the liberty that they had lost.

Thus then, much as has undeniably been done to crush, repress, and impede national development in Hungary, the genius of the country still asserts itself; and the long period of peace which has enabled Europe to perfect her institutions, to extend her commerce, and to ameliorate the condition of her colonies, has also produced its effect in the country of the Magyar. Under these

circumstances it is no longer to be expected that she can be merged into another state without violent and determined efforts at opposition; while it is palpable that the wise and enlightened policy of a great Empire will see the expediency of temporising with the feelings of a people, among whom the chivalry of past times still exists; and who cling to the traditions of their country's glory, as fondly as though it were a tale of yesterday.

The great bulwarks of German monarchism in Hungary are the cities, which are a species of privileged colonies, founded by the different Kings, dependent entirely upon the throne, and, moreover, bound to the Sovereign for the chief part, by national sympathy; the predominant population of nearly all the cities throughout the kingdom being German.

The industry, arts, and commerce of the country have also hitherto been principally carried on by Germans, the Magyars being a warlike rather than a trading people; and the aristocracy, by reason of their local privileges, being incompetent to enter into commercial relations. It was, conse-

quently, to legal and political studies that the Hungarian nobles turned their attention when they sheathed their swords.

Thus, there are no merchants in the country who can compete with the Germans, save indeed the Jews, who are intuitively traders all over the world; while nearly all the talent in law, politics, and I may also venture to add, science, centres in the native Hungarians.

Had the German attempt to condense the varied population into one common whole been successful, there is no doubt that the country would ere this have made more rapid progress towards complete refinement and civilization; but it is no less certain that it would have lost all its distinctive constitutional elements, and have degenerated into a mere Austrian province, swallowed up under the generic appellation of 'Germany,' as her fine-looking soldiers are even to-day under the common name of the 'Austrian army.'

It is impossible to imagine finer troops; and although they have ever done, and no doubt are still ready to do their duty, whenever they may be called upon, I have had repeated occasion to

learn how it irks their pride to be massed up with Germans, Italians, Bohemians, and all the other nations and provinces which go to make up the aggregate of the Austrian Empire, without any distinctive mention; although it is an historical fact that the Hungarian Grenadiers have more than once conduced in an eminent degree to the success of the Austrian arms; and that even to this day the Emperor is surrounded in his own Capital, by a "Noble Hungarian Guard," composed of young Magyar Magnates, whose magnificent and chivalrous-looking costume forms a prominent feature in all the Imperial ceremonials.

The Diet of 1825 aroused the dormant spirit of the people; and it is to be doubted if it will ever slumber again. The gong of freedom has sounded throughout Europe—the semi-barbarous absolutism of Russia has become a byword and a reproach; and no second Poland will ever be permitted to suffer immolation beneath the chariot-wheels of a political Jaggernaut—nor will it probably be attempted by any high-minded Government.

It is assuredly to be believed as well as hoped

that as the right-minded and the rational Hungarians do not to-day seek any change of monarchy, and only desire to retain their national privileges and individuality under their present sovereign; so Austria on her side will not longer seek to crush a spirit which she cannot extinguish, and will conquer only by concession. The Magyar is an ally to be won; a subject to be conciliated: all the noble elements are already there, and it needs only the cherishing care and encouragement of his rulers to make his country a landmark throughout Europe.

The last Diet, as I have already remarked, awoke the nation to more internal activity; and from that time the agitation has continued unabated throughout the country. It is true that the cities, with their mercantile inhabitants devoted entirely to commerce, do not even yet comprehend the importance of becoming perfectly nationalized; but as both literary and social improvement progresses about them, the trading classes are nevertheless approximating more and more with the Hungarian middle ranks.

One effort of the present Diet is to develope

nationality, and to diminish foreign influence—another to protect and encourage the moral and material interests of the country; and the Liberal party have so far succeeded, that the King has consented to their request that the Representations (of which I have already explained the nature and technicality) should be drawn up in the Hungarian language *only;* a point of far greater importance to the nation in its present position than it is easy for a people like the English to comprehend.

At the present moment (27th Nov. 1839,) a party in the Diet has made another stand, and it is one that, should it be carried, will thoroughly test the power of the Ultra-Liberals with the Sovereign: a dangerous experiment, on which all the friends of Hungary must look with great anxiety. Many concessions have been latterly made by the Government: and it is certain that many more must follow before the nation will be satisfied. But this very circumstance renders it the more imperative on its legislators to be careful not to take up ground which they cannot hold; nor to advance demands which run great risk of

ultimate rejection. There are idealists who teach themselves to believe that mere human will can subvert the laws of nature: but they are miserably self-deceived. The law of gradual development is immutable—and that gradual development can only be secured by a well-digested system of action and reaction between the principles of stability and progression—and thus those who would achieve all things within the hour, only heap a ruin where they would build a city.

By an extreme measure the Government on a late occasion imprisoned (as already stated) the Baron Wesselenyi, M. Kossuth, and a number of other individuals for political crimes: all comprised in speaking or writing too freely of the existing state of things. Of the great severity of the sentence, considering the amount of the offence there can be little doubt; but that severity of itself sufficed to render the individuals who suffered under it, patriot-martyrs in the eyes of nearly all the country; and gave to the whole affair an importance which it could never otherwise have won.

The stand to which I allude has been to demand

the restoration of constitutional Freedom of Speech, independent of all interference from the Government: and thus far, it is precisely what the nation had a right to expect from the Liberal party. But superadded to this demand the party have required the liberation of all the before-quoted political delinquents; or, in other words, a tacit admission from the Government that it has illegally interfered with the privileges of the people, and meted out punishment where none was due; and to this requisition they desire to append a declaration that, should the King refuse compliance, they will withhold the levy of troops required about three months hence to replace those whose period of service has expired.

How little the rational party even among the Liberals, expect that such a proposition will be entertained, is evident from the fact, that when the sense of the Chamber was taken, although more than two-thirds of the members are anti-Royalists, there were only twenty-eight votes in support of the measure; but the very attempt gives an admirable idea of the excitement which prevails in the country.

On glancing over the last few pages, I perceive that I have been very obscure with regard to the position, both political and moral, of the cities; and I cannot probably find a better opportunity than the present of explaining the little weight which their representatives carry in the Diet.

I have already stated that the cities throughout Hungary were founded and built by the Sovereigns; but I must also mention that parties of German colonists, introduced by the Government for the purpose of directing and carrying on the commerce of the country, were fostered and encouraged until ultimately they erected towns under the immediate auspices of the King, and made all their local laws in reference to his will, and without any connection with the country in which they dwelt.

Here commenced that heart-burning and jarring of interests which are not totally extinguished even to this hour.

The German settlers plumed themselves on their superior civilization and refinement, and on the immediate countenance and protection of the Monarch, and clung tenaciously to their own

customs and language, without making an effort to conceal the contempt which they felt for their less polished neighbours. The Hungarians on their part looked down with unmitigated disdain on the usurping traders who had forced themselves into the country; and, as lords of the soil, refused to mingle with the more ignoble traffickers who had come among them; they cared not to be understood or appreciated; and thus for eight or nine generations the two nations had continued to live in the same land as utterly distinct as though the broad waves of the Atlantic had rolled between them, until latterly a better and more conciliating spirit has grown up; and the concessions of the Sovereign relatively to the national language, have rendered it incumbent upon every resident in Hungary to thoroughly understand it.

The vast importance of this innovation it is almost impossible to appreciate. While the country was parcelled out among different tribes, almost (and sometimes quite) unintelligible to each other, there could be no internal strength. The three great divisions of the population, con-

sisting of Germans, Hungarians, and Sclaves, had scarcely a feeling in common; and, moreover, they were rendered bitter by conflicting interests; and more bitter still by conflicting creeds. The Sclave hated the Magyar, as the smitten warrior ever loathes the strong hand that has beaten him down; the Magyar despised the Sclave because he had permitted himself to be vanquished; and the German looked with contempt on both, as on savages who could neither comprehend nor value him.

The natural result followed: the Sclaves reluctantly acquired an imperfect knowledge of the language of the Hungarians, because it was essential to their comfort, and even to their existence; but the Hungarians, even when they condescended to imbibe a partial knowledge of the German for the furtherance of their own convenience, never polluted their lips with the language of the vanquished; while the Germans, holding themselves independent of both, would not render any tongue available save their own.

Recent events have, however, greatly changed the aspect of affairs; and the triumph is immense

for Hungary. The human frame must perish without a heart—the globe itself must crumble without a centre—and thus Hungary, with her Babel of tongues, and diversity of feelings and interests, could not have flourished and grown into strength without an internal *point d'appui.*

This *desideratum* the Royal concessions have afforded: the German merchant, to whom the Hungarian language was formerly as unfamiliar as the dialect of Timbuctoo, now makes it a principal feature in the education of his children; and what is a still more propitious augury for Hungary, the Jew (that intuitive seer into the future,) introduces it into his household, as though he foreknew that half a century hence his son could not drive his trade without its assistance.

The cities, as I have mentioned above, recognizing no authority nor power save that of the King, necessarily made no legal step without the royal sanction; and thus, even to-day, the local officers are all self-elected, without any appeal to the citizens. These individuals are consequently the devoted dependents of the Sovereign, never venturing to dispute his will, nor to ques-

tion its legality. They are quite divided in interest from the inhabitants of the city, and authorized to exact great severity; but they are of no national importance, in consequence of their trammelled position; and thus it is that the Diet concedes to them collectively only a couple of votes, and holds them of no importance when a question is pending, as their voice is naturally in every case for the Government.

One of the last propositions of the Landtag has been to qualify individuals in the different cities as voters, by whom the local magistrates may be freely elected by ballot, like the members of the two Tables; when they may at once enjoy their privilege in the Diet, and represent their cities, as the present members represent their counties, by separate and individual votes; but until this point is conceded it is impossible to admit them to a free share in the legislature of the country, as their number alone, sold as they are to the Government, would suffice to carry every measure that might be brought before the

CHAPTER XVII.

A GLANCE AT PAST TIMES—NATIONAL DISTINCTIONS—THE SCLAVONIANS — THE GERMANS — HUNGARIAN LITERATURE — SCLAVONIC LITERATURE — RUSSIA AGAIN — RELIGIOUS THRALDOM AND POLITICAL FREEDOM—M. SIGISMUND BEÖTHY—ECCLESIASTICAL REVENUES—PROTESTANT COLLEGES—LUTHERAN SEMINARIES—SCLAVONIAN PREACHERS—DISORGANISATION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH — COLLEGE OF DEBRETZIN — THE TOGATI — ILLIBERALITY OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD.

THE three most important nations in Hungary, as I have already shown, are the Hungarians, the Germans, and the Sclavonians. The first were led into the country as conquerors by their valorous Dukes in the ninth century; and having spread themselves over the most fertile parts of the land, and scattered themselves throughout the vast *pusztas* or plains, they left the mountains

to the vanquished Sclaves. The German colonists were invited into the country, some few before the invasions of the Mongols in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, but principally after the frightful devastations of the Turks and Mongols between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the population no longer sufficed for the common necessities of existence. The larger portion of these colonists are Saxons, and inhabit a great part of Transylvania and the mountain cities of Schemnitz, Neusohl, &c., and the county called Zips. The remainder are Swabes; and as I have already mentioned, several cities have been founded or populated by them.

There is an immense distinction between the Hungarian and Sclavonian national character, which the contact of centuries has failed to destroy, although it must necessarily have become in some degree weakened; nor will it probably disappear altogether for ages yet to come, as the Hungarian has an inborn and earnest contempt for the Sclave, who in return nourishes a deep and gnawing jealousy against the nation by

which he was dispossessed of the supremacy of the land.

The Magyar peasant is bold, warlike, and courteous; of melancholy temperament, fond of animals, and greatly inclined to indolence; preferring a rifle to a plough, and a gallop over the wide *pusztas* to labour in the fields; and universally proud of his nation and of the antiquity of its descent, (which, *par parenthèse*, as the illustrious family of Esterházy claim to originate in Adam himself, can scarcely be disputed!) The country gentlemen of Hungary are hospitable, haughty, ostentatious, fond of luxury and splendour, sincere, and frank, with a high feeling of honour and courage.

The Sclavonians are of minor importance. They are much poorer, but infinitely more cheerful in temperament than the Magyars; fond of music and dancing, good-humoured, totally devoid of national pride, insinuating in their manners, deceitful, and intriguing.

The Hungarian peasant, when brought into contact with a superior, takes off his hat, and stands erect; but the Sclavonian never ventures to

resume his perpendicular until he is dismissed: his submission, real or affected, is extreme; and whatever may be the feeling of his heart, it is hidden there, lest it should mar his fortunes.

The Germans, however they may have mingled with the Magyars, have preserved their national peculiarities intact. They are reserved, unostentatious, and manly; and the fiery Magyar, despite his disdain for their commercial avocations and unwarlike habits, yet never denies his respect for their general character and attainments; while he pours out upon the Sclave his most unmitigated contempt; holds him as false and unmanly; and has continually on his lips the popular proverb, "*Tót nem ember!*—the Sclave is not a man!" while the German in his turn applies to the Hungarian the term "*betyár*," or groom, to imply his inferiority in civilization.

Formerly these national antipathies were pushed to the extremest point; and even yet there are numerous villages in which the Magyar inhabitants will hold no communication with their German or Sclavonian neighbours, for the purposes of trade or barter; where they do not even

understand each other's language; and will not permit the intermarriage of their children.

All this feeling is necessarily diminishing, however; particularly the jealousy which existed between the Magyar and the German. The former having latterly devoted himself more earnestly to the promotion of commerce, industry, and art, has learnt better to appreciate the persevering and useful character of the German merchant, and to feel the beneficial effects which an enlarged and steady commerce must ensure to his country. The advancement of Hungarian literature has also been considerable during the last fifty years; and this fact has naturally conduced to temper down and refine the habits and feelings of the people; and it would be difficult to encounter anywhere more high-bred and high-toned individuals than among the upper classes of the Hungarians, when they can be persuaded to divest themselves of their meerschaums, or at least to consider them as accessories and not necessaries of existence.

The Sclavonic-Hungarian approximation progresses far more slowly, for there is a deep-rooted

hatred of the Magyars implanted in the bosom of the Sclaves: they loathe them as their conquerors; they are jealous of them because they are outstripped in moral and social improvement; and, above all, they have a separate and engrossing interest independent of the soil, which acts as a barrier against free and perfect intercommunion.

The principal portion of the Sclavonic population in Hungary profess the religion of the Greek church, and in Transylvania there are scarcely any who exercise another faith; these call themselves *Russnyaks*, and, be it remarked *en passant*, pray openly for the Emperor of Russia, even in the Hungarian Capital, as "our Czar;" a devotion which is repaid by that Sovereign both in money and patronage. Much has been said of a Sclavonic-propaganda in Hungary, instigated and developed by Russian influence, both moral and material; and its effect has tended so greatly to the increase of that nation, that some among them, it is affirmed, have even begun to cherish dreams of establishing in the country of the Magyars a Sclavonic Monarchy! a wild vision, which rouses

the ridicule rather than the jealousy of the Hungarians, who form numerically one-third of the entire population, and laugh at the absurd pretensions of their unwarlike neighbours.

The Sclavonic literature is under the decided and undisguised protection of Russia, who rewards both with gold and favour every Sclave writer of any reputation, let him inhabit what country he may; and such is said to be the case in the instance of a Sclavonic Protestant ecclesiastic of Pesth, renowned throughout Hungary for his great knowledge of Sclave literature and fanatic nationalism. The Poles alone, notwithstanding their Sclavonic origin, are universally anti-Russian; but this fact must be so obvious as scarcely to require mention.

According to the Hungarian law, no distinction of religion is permitted to interfere with the privileges and immunities of the citizens; but it may be truly said that this understanding does

> "....Keep the word of promise to the ear,
> And break it to the sense."

Nor will it appear surprising that such should

be the case, when it is remembered that a great proportion of the population are Germans, that the monarchy is Germanic, and that the German papists are the most bigoted and intolerant in the world, not even excepting the Spaniards. Austria may indeed at this moment be said to be the stronghold of popery, and Austria is the head of the Hungarian nation; the priests are her organs, her mainspring, and her slaves. The hierarchy is a powerful friend and a fierce enemy; and it must not be forgotten that Maria Theresa overthrew the wise and liberal measures of her predecessors, and forced upon a reformed Protestant country not only a papistical church, but a horde of Jesuits, whose spirit is yet rife in the land.

The natural consequence has resulted from this fact. In every path of life the Protestants are repressed, their progress checked and impeded, and their prospects darkened; like the blight which ruins, or at best injures vegetation, the Protestants *feel* the evil influence which they have no power to dispel nor to disperse.

In the Lower Chamber of the Diet the greatest

toleration is observed on this question; all the Reformed Members are perfectly free from prejudice with regard to creeds; and many of the Catholic Deputies constantly speak against the attempted despotism and actual power of the Priests. M. Sigismund de Beöthy, himself a Catholic, acquired great celebrity, as I have mentioned elsewhere, by his defence of the Protestant cause; but the Upper Table, where the hierarchy have more influence, and the papist population, who are entirely under the control of their churchmen, are vehement and vindictive against Reformists.

As I before noticed, the Government is essentially Catholic, but nevertheless its bearing towards the Prelates has been decided and energetic; and it has refused to sanction, or even to permit any tyranny on the part of the Bishops; but it yet strengthens their moral and actual influence by enormous and overpowering incomes, ill-suited to the resources and means of the nation. That of the Prince-Prelate amounts to 900,000 silver florins yearly; a fortune far surpassing that of any of the Archducal family, and only exceeded in the country by the revenues of Prince Esterházy.

The Protestants have several good colleges in Hungary. The most popular are those of Debretzin, Sárospatak, Papa, Poson, Kesmárk and Oedenburg, including both Lutherans and Calvinists. The three former are essentially Calvinistic, and there, as in our own Universities, modern and practical knowledge is in a great degree sacrificed to classical attainments.

Pesth contains about four thousand five hundred Lutherans, and three thousand Calvinists; each have churches and schools, but the seminaries of the Lutherans are the most distinguished. The Calvinists are entirely Hungarians; while the Lutheran ministers are indifferently Magyars, Germans, and Sclaves, each preaching in his own language; a fact which, far from being beneficial to the Reformed Church, as it ought to be, is unhappily the root of jealousy, bitterness, and dissension; the Sclavonic clergy suffering their hatred of the Hungarians to appear in the pulpit whence peace alone should be their text; and thence engendering evil feelings which tend to produce disunion among the Reformists, and to make the misunderstandings of their respective congrega-

tions a theme of gossip among the Catholics, of which their priests do not fail to take advantage.

The Reformed Church is also in a state of disorganisation deeply to be deplored. There is no established clerical supremacy in the country, and there is always confusion and disorder among the ecclesiastics themselves. Its educational establishments are, however, greatly superior to those of the Catholics in liberality of spirit, and opportunities of information; a fact admitted by the Catholics themselves, who confess that the Protestant students generally distinguish themselves by a higher spiritual and moral development than their own. Formerly the youths intended for the Reformed Church received their education in the different German Universities, but since the last revolutionary movement this system has been interdicted.

The principal College is considered to be that of Debretzin, founded in 1792, which possesses a library of upwards of twenty thousand volumes, and contains more than two thousand students. The Lyceum at Poson has a philosophical professor, a preparatory legal class, and a theological

class. It is said that there is not in the whole kingdom so high and liberal an academical spirit in any scholastic establishment as in that of Poson.

The Lyceum of Oedenburg (Sopron) is similarly organised; but is more limited in its means, and not at all academical in its bearing. At Eperies there is an educational institution, entitled Collegium; a Gymnasium at Schemnitz, and another at Leutsan; and Lyceums at Losontz and Ketskemet.

There are also elementary schools (Trivial Schulen) in every parish, in the whole of which the Magyar language now forms a necessary feature of education. The wealthy Protestant families take great interest in these establishments, which they foster with their patronage, and to which many of them contribute largely.

The students at the colleges are divided into two classes; and the principal class into two divisions called Togati and non-Togati. The Togati are those who study for the ministry, or to enable themselves to become professors in their

turn; and these wear a loose black gown called *Toga*, whence they derive their distinctive appellation, whenever they are in church or classes. Their principal privilege is that of being permitted to preach in the different parishes where the reformed religion is practised, on all great festivals, and this is conceded to them by a diploma from their college called Patens, signed by the rector; on these occasions they receive a present in money, and frequently large donations of provisions, which tend to render their means of support more certain throughout the succeeding quarter.

Twelve of these individuals act as supervisors to the rest; but before they can exercise this authority they must have resided in the college as Togati for several years, and have terminated their studies to the entire satisfaction of the authorities. On entering as *Primarii* they swear publicly to fulfil all their duties without subterfuge or equivocation; and having so done they have free ingress to every room in the establishment, which the ordinary students are not per-

mitted to close against them; and they become responsible for the moral character and conduct of the whole body.

The Togati have free lodging in the college, a small sum allowed yearly for candles, and between one and two *metzen** of wheat; but they find their own firing, and cook outside the walls if they see fit to do so, when their food is brought to their rooms by a fag *(dienstbaren Schulknaben)*. The Primarii have a President and a Vice (Senior and Contrascriba), the first of whom receives a salary of four hundred silver florins annually. The others act as private tutors to the students.

The *non-Togati* are general scholars intended for the different learned professions, for diplomacy, or private life.

The other and less advanced pupils are formed into nine classes, and are also instructed by the Togati.

The college dues vary according to the circumstances of the students; an arrangement which enables the poorer families to secure for their sons

* One bushel and three-quarters, Winchester measure.

the same advantages as those afforded to the more wealthy. Some of the pupils do not pay more than three silver florins yearly, and none exceed nine, whatever may be their means. The great expense is the engagement of private tutors from among the Togati, who are paid according to their talents, and who maintain themselves principally by tuition.

Thus it will be seen that the "semi-barbarous" Magyars are not living quite in the state of ignorance and inertness which party spirit and political feeling have tried to make us believe in England. I do not say that the students are dandies or *élégants*, but I can assert that they are by no means so elaborately impertinent as many of our own Oxonians and Cantabs, nor so fantastically boorish as the German Bürschen.

Debretzin may be termed the head-quarters of Hungarian Calvinism; and all the students leave her college both staunch Protestants and loyal Magyars. The Lutherans are more numerous in the northern and easterly parts of the country, and as I have already mentioned, include both Germans and Sclaves.

It was not until the reign of Joseph the Second that the Protestants of Hungary were permitted to erect places of worship, or even to establish schools; and were released from the galling necessity of attending Catholic churches, and being bound by Catholic oaths. It was also at the same period that the privilege was accorded to Protestant fathers of educating their sons in their own faith, even where the mother was of the popish persuasion.

This privilege (following up the narrow and bigoted example of the Archbishop of Duning) the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Hungary were lately endeavouring to wrest from the Reformists; but the struggle proved as impotent as it was ungenerous and impolitic; for the lay community at large condemned the measure, and the quiet but safe moral progression which is taking place throughout the country, condemned the priesthood to a disappointment which only tended to exhibit their weakness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HUNGARIAN DEFECTS—MAGYAR VANITY—PAUPERIZED NOBILITY—COMMERCIAL TREATY—BARON SINA—SUPINENESS OF THE MAGNATES—"SEQUESTERS"—LEGAL ADMINISTRATION—NATIONAL DISADVANTAGES—NOBLES AND COMMONERS—COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES—TAXES ON THE NOBLES—DEFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAWS—IMPERFECT LEGISLATION—NECESSITY FOR REFORM.

I HAVE found so much to admire and to praise in the national character of the Hungarians, that I feel less repugnance than I should otherwise have done, to dwelling for awhile upon their defects. There exists no country under Heaven where the truthful chronicler can declare that he has found all perfect; and assuredly such is not to be expected of a land which has suffered so many vicissitudes as that of which I am now writing.

Little more than a century has elapsed since it

was writhing under the rule of the Infidel—its institutions ruined, its libraries destroyed, its religion scouted, and all, save its high chivalric feeling, trampled in the dust. Subsequently to that period it has been slowly asserting itself, but still under disadvantages which have greatly tended to retard its progress; and consequently the most patriotic of its sons, and those who are the most jealous of its honour, are not blind enough to anticipate that the stranger can fail to perceive the internal imperfections which tend to weaken its moral strength, and to lessen its moral character; and they will forgive this the more readily that they are themselves conscious of the leaven, and anxious to reject it. They have a keen susceptibility of the great and the noble in all things, and an overweening desire to emulate it; and thus the greatest step towards amelioration is already taken.

The besetting sin of the Magyar is vanity. He is proud of his nation, of his liberty, of his antiquity, and above all, of his privileges. In short, he admits no superior, and scarcely an equal, when he has high blood, a long pedigree, and an apparent rent-roll. I say apparent, for perhaps

Europe cannot present collectively so pauperized a nobility as that of Hungary, when their circumstances and position are thoroughly understood. From the gorgeous and princely Esterházy, with his debt of two millions sterling, to the minor Magnate who rattles over the pavement of Pesth behind his four ill-groomed horses, there are not twenty nobles in the country who are not *de facto* bankrupts.

This is a startling assertion, but one which can be easily borne out.; and hence the great difficulty (greater even than those originated by the jealousies of the Austrian Government) to the establishment of a solid and serviceable foreign commerce. The Hungarian noble sacrifices everything to show, and luxury, and ostentation: and thus his necessities ever outrun his income, and he is compelled to dispose of the productions of his extensive estates to a swarm of Jews and traders, who profit by his inconsiderate prodigality.

"The idea of a commercial treaty with England is at best a bubble for the present;" said one of the most intelligent of the Magnates with

whom I was one day conversing on this subject; "We have still much to do ere it can be brought to bear. The Magyars have not yet learnt to be traders; and as to the nobles—we one and all prefer sitting quietly upon our sofas, and disposing of our produce for a given number of years to an accommodating individual who will pay down the price *argent comptant*, even though it be at a loss of fifty per cent., to having the trouble of speculating, calculating, and waiting, in order to rid ourselves of the sacrifice."

Of this fact I have had ample verifications since I have been in the country; and Baron Sina, the great Greek Banker, may truly be said to be the King of commercial Hungary, for I have been assured that he is the creditor of every Magnate in the nation. How far his engagements with Austria may leave him untrammelled in his other speculations it is not for me to decide; but it is certain that no undertaking here can be carried through without him. His money has served to rebuild most of the good houses ruined by the inundation—the wood from his estates, as well as his gold, is to aid the construction of the bridge

over the Danube—in short, no speculation has lately been undertaken without Baron Sina, whose wealth has purchased his nobility, and whose name is an *open sesame* which here at least cannot easily be resisted.

The great national misfortune of this state of things is, that as in Hungary there is no law of imprisonment for debt, and that even if there were, it could not affect the nobles, whose privileges would exempt them from the penalty, the excesses of the Magnates entail ruin upon the trading classes, who are unable to contend against the enormous losses contingent on the defalcation of the higher orders; and thus the whole commerce of the country is crippled by the follies of a few.

That I am supported in my opinion is proved by the fact that the Jews, who transact all immediate traffic with the nobles, will not trust a penny to the personal pledges of a Magnate, nor to the protection of the Hungarian law; and that they nevertheless purchase at a ridiculously low price all the products of the land, such as wool, corn, wood, &c., by merely paying in advance; and

thus enabling the nobles to continue their career of extravagance, for which they would otherwise need funds.

The obvious result of this miserable arrangement is simply this—that while they keep the proud Magnate who seems to spurn them from his path in a state of actual moral subjection, they endanger the progress of agriculture, commerce, and industry; for the peasant labours grudgingly for the greedy Israelite; who, in his turn, looks not beyond the harvest which he is himself to garner, caring little for the neglect which may ensue; and meanwhile, as I have before remarked, many of the bankrupt lords could barely meet all the demands upon them by disposing of their whole estates.

When a difficulty of this nature becomes extreme, the great landholder is placed under "sequester," as it is technically called; that is, his property (which cannot be sold) is placed under a legal administration totally independent of his influence, and he receives annually from the proper authorities in charge, one-twelfth of the

revenues, until with the remaining eleven parts his debts are paid.

Let it not be believed, however, that they are discharged on the principle of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Far from it. The administration generally commences its duties by a lawsuit with the creditors; disputing every debt, impeaching the opposing party of usury; when, can it be proved that he has realised, or rather striven to realise, more than six per cent., he loses all claim upon the estate of the debtor; and tendering to others the moiety of their claim, *pendente lite;* to which conditions they frequently accede rather than run the risk of an action at law which may endure for years, and entail an outlay so considerable as to render the ultimately beneficial effect of the result extremely doubtful.

This is a state of things as lamentable as it is unjust; and one of which it is sincerely to be trusted that the high-minded Magnates of Hungary will soon cease to avail themselves altogether; as any hope of national credit must be altogether futile while such a system

exists. The Jews may indeed submit, after robbing the indolent and supercilious noble of four-fifths of his property, to be robbed in their turn of the remaining portion; for they bring no pride or self-respect to the barter: but the upright and substantial merchant, whose character is based upon his commercial transactions, and who embarks his good faith and his capital together, will never lend himself to so iniquitous a system; and consequently until an immense reform is worked among the great proprietors,—until they shall have learned to limit their outlay to their means of meeting it, and thus have rid themselves of the harpies who now prey upon them, and left themselves free to dispose of their incomes as nobles instead of debtors, there is no prospect of commercial greatness for Hungary. Not only is this emancipation, therefore, an individual, but a national duty; for the wealthy landowners should remember that by their vice of prodigality they are not crippling themselves, more than they are injuring the class beneath them.

In the admirable work of Count Stephen Sze-

chényi, entitled "The Credit," he has spoken freely and strikingly of this weak side of his nation, and accused them of a *want of order*, which tends to impede progression. Every friend of this fine country must breathe a hearty wish that he may not have written in vain.

Nor is the evil which I have already pointed out the only one to which the iniquitous system just detailed subjects the community at large; for until it be totally changed, Hungary cannot enjoy the benefit of a national bank, nor of the system of exchange so general throughout the whole civilized world; and which has been a topic in the present Diet; where a committee has been formed to ascertain the practicability of establishing a system of exchange by bills in the country; of which several intelligent Hungarian bankers, and a talented advocate of Vienna, have been appointed members.

It has been decided, indeed, that four courts are shortly to be established in Hungary for the furtherance of this desirable object; and it is moreover a very striking feature in the arrangement that the Government is to be at the whole

expense of their maintenance; but a radical reform must be accomplished among the higher classes ere they can be rendered available.

Another error of the Hungarian Magnates is their overweening contempt for commerce, and for all who are connected with it; by which they wound the feelings of the trading population, which being principally composed of German citizens, tends to retard the development of that common nationality so much to be desired by all true friends of the country. The strong line of demarcation now drawn between the noble and the commercial classes has many disadvantages and discrepancies in a nation like Hungary, priding itself upon its freedom, and jealous of all external authority; as it enforces on the one hand, and admits on the other, a tyranny the more galling to those who are subjected to its influence, that it is an integral part of their own internal national system, and not an evil forced upon them by foreign policy.

There are several passages in the laws on which a better social scheme could readily be based, and the two classes approximated very consider-

ably without injury to either; but the *morgue* of the Magyar aristocracy is too decided to enable them to comprehend the ultimate benefit which must accrue even to their own order from such an arrangement. It is, however, devoutly to be hoped that among the numerous reforms which they are now introducing into their country, they will not omit to correct so glaring and mischievous an error as this; and one which tends so perniciously to crush the growing energies of the people.

It will perhaps appear that I am becoming querulous in thus pointing out the defects of the chivalrous Magnates of Hungary; but I trust to be believed when I assert that I do so from a sense of duty; for after a residence of some months in the country, during which I have enjoyed opportunities of observation which have enabled me to look beyond the surface of things, I feel compelled to display the foil as well as the jewel.

Nor are the Magyar nobles themselves blind to the fact that among their many high and estimable qualities are mingled others of more questionable character. Every nation has its dark phase, and

the writer whose aim is truth must exhibit the shadow as well as the light.

The great misfortune of royalty, as is frequently asserted, is the impossibility of its ever hearing the truth, by which fact it is rendered unable to correct the defects of which it is necessarily unconscious. In a less degree the Magnates of Hungary have suffered from the same cause; but they are now beginning to comprehend the errors of that feudality of feeling to which they have so long clung, and the next step will doubtless be its utter abolition.

Their financial abuses will require more effort in their cure; long-indulged habits of excess are not easily thrown aside, and few things require more moral courage than effective retrenchment, either in a nation or an individual. The evil is, however, so glaring, and the necessity for reform so imperative, that no proprietor calling himself a patriot can long persevere in so lawless and ruinous a system.

There is, perhaps, no influence in the country which could so powerfully tend towards the principle of approximation to which I have alluded

above, as that of the County Municipalities, which, unlike those of the towns, do not acknowledge the control of the Sovereign, and even make statutes when they consider it necessary to do so, with an independence of authority with which the Government cannot effectually interfere.

Thus, several Comitats have erected public buildings, founded public establishments, and reorganised schools and institutions, passing at the same time a decree that every noble of the county should be annually taxed for their support. Others have built bridges and dug dykes at the expense of the nobles; while others again have accorded to Protestant ministers (notwithstanding the minority of the Reformed religion) votes in all their public meetings, as well as in the elections for county magistrates; and have even elected individuals who were not noble to serve as Assessors to the Magistracy of the Comitat: facts which tend to prove that the County Municipalities are the most liberal and independent bodies in Hungary, and that much amelioration might be effected in the state of the country through their means; while they also remove a general and popular error

which has induced travellers to assert that the Hungarian nobles are altogether exempt from taxation of any kind.

It is also worthy of mention that as early as the eleventh century, during the reign of Bela the First, the Magnates took with them to the Diet a great number of Commoners, with whom they voted and acted in conjunction; and that a law was passed under Matthias Corvinus, enforcing the taxation of the Nobles for the liquidation of the county expenses. Two admirable examples of tolerance and equity, which were they followed in the present day, would do more to accelerate civilization, and forward the moral regeneration of the country, than half the modern innovations.

It is certain that the great evil in Hungary consists not so much in the laws themselves, as in their imperfect administration, and the defective manner in which they are understood; for notwithstanding that there are many points in the constitution which are extremely faulty, particularly those relating to the privileged and unprivileged classes; yet are there others which have

been framed exclusively for the protection of the inferior grades of the population, and which require only to be rightly applied; and even in the fundamental laws themselves authorities are not wanting for affording to them this protection.

The wise and energetic Matthias Corvinus, as early as the year 1486, decided (Art. 4.) "*Universæ causæ etiam in facto jurum possessionariorum, coram quovis judice deinceps movendæ, absque omni prorogatione et exceptione in quatuor ortavis, a cominentur;*" that is—that all trials of right of possession, before whatever judge they might be held, without any prorogation or exception, should be terminated within the year.

Subsequently to this edict, several other similar decrees have been made; and the Emperor Joseph emulated his great predecessor by declaring that with one *replic* and one *duplic* every process must, and should be ended.

If, therefore, with these ancient and honest laws, on which to base an upright and honourable system of action, some trials now last in Hungary longer than a life—if a fraudulent trustee wastes the possessions of a too credulous client, who is ruined

in the endeavour to reclaim his rights—if a respectable merchant is endangered both in property and honour by a prodigal young nobleman, and becoming weary and disheartened by an unequal struggle against a power which he cannot control, is ultimately compelled to accept a miserable compensation—if the creditor cannot receive his money, lavished in providing for the uncalculating luxury of another, who has imposed upon his credulity by the magic of a high-sounding name—the executive power is surely in fault in Hungary, and not the law.

Nor is the question of personal security more satisfactorily arranged; the whole police of a Comitat of two or three hundred thousand inhabitants being committed to a Vice-Count, with six or eight county judges *(Föbiró)*, and as many jurors *(Eskütt)*, apparently (and, I am assured, practically,) a very inefficient arrangement, entailing unavoidable neglect, where it would not exist were the legal authorities better proportioned to the population.

Formerly magistrates were appointed by all great landholders to superintend the peasants on

their properties; and these local magistrates had immense influence and control; while the proprietors themselves exercised the office of judges in all matters relating to their own tenants and serfs. This power necessarily entailed much evil, as it gave undue authority to the master over his dependent, and subjected the latter in many cases to tyranny and injustice, where there arose a question between him and his lord; and therefore it was that the last Diet made so vigorous an attempt to ameliorate and amend the constitution of the peasant laws; and to remove these abuses by taking all political and jurisdictional power from the landed proprietors and their dependent magistrates, and vesting the necessary authority unreservedly in the County officers.

The measure was carried; but unfortunately it was premature, inasmuch as no provision was previously made to supply the vacancies which it created; and thus the duties formerly performed by from fifty to a hundred individuals, devolved entirely on the before-mentioned ten or fifteen; while in addition to this circumstance it must not be overlooked that the County *employés* are

merely honorary officers, receiving no remuneration for their services; and that consequently, however efficient they may be in a legal point of view, they are not always particularly strenuous nor energetic in the execution of their duty.

The *Föbiró* is frequently a sportsman, and he dismisses a cause in haste, because he is anxious to pursue a fox; the *Eskütt* nods in court, and follows his colleague from the hall, because he can sleep more comfortably at home. Public business is never so efficiently performed in any country as when it is well paid for; and these honorary-offices are one of the weak points of Hungarian internal economy.

The administration of justice and executive law are dangerous things to entrust to men who are individually independent of the result of their own actions; and to whose honour and good feeling they are committed, without the additional safeguard of strong personal obligation and pecuniary interest. What is given gratuitously by public men may be given willingly; but human nature will still assert itself, and the natural consequence ensues,—that it will be bestowed with

the least possible inconvenience and exertion of the donor, as a boon and not as a duty. There may be a moral, but there is no positive obligation; and in all affairs of a mere technical and political nature, there must be an absolute and personal interest, or laxity and indifference will speedily take the place of energy and caution. A man may resolve to be honest; and he may act, in as far as he exerts himself, according to the dictates of his conscience; but where the welfare of others is at stake, as much mischief may be done by carelessness as by deliberate injustice.

The Emperor Joseph, among his many admirable measures, contemplated a reform in this very unconstitutional system of administering the law; whose defective execution is apparent to all classes, and which weighs heavily upon that which is the least able to suffer from its abuse; a fact so evident that the Austria-Hungarian Government is much blamed (and surely with great reason!) for not exerting a more energetic interference on a subject where it would carry public opinion entirely along with it.

Another and very striking evil attends the

present state of things which I must not pass over without remark. The *Föbiró* and *Eskütt* are during all the sittings of the Diet absent from their counties, being called to Presburg to legislate for the nation. They are all members of the two highest tribunals in the country (the King's Table and the Septemviral Table) at which they take their seats; and meanwhile Justice hangs up her scales in the Halls of the different Comitats, and enjoys a quiet *siesta* until such time as her executive officers can return to awaken her once more into action.

The members of the Two Tables discuss measures of general importance, tending to the prosperity of their country; and meanwhile, internal misrule is slowly but surely progressing for want of proper means of suppression. The germ which might have been crushed like a noxious insect under the heel of power, had it been met at once, grows into strength and volume if suffered to remain unchecked; and thus the most important duty towards the nation,—that of developing its civilization and moral worth—is neglected in the general attempt to aggrandize or benefit a people

who are meanwhile retrograding for want of proper internal control and encouragement.

Emulation is as necessary to the painstaking citizen who is struggling in his vocation, as coercion to the knave who is making his trade of trickery and fraud; and where both the one and the other are entirely withdrawn, even although it may be but for a time, the effects of so dangerous a social abandonment will be evident on the whole mass; and the evil which springs rapidly and freely in the hotbed of human passion and human egotism, is a foul and far-spreading weed which it requires both time and strength to eradicate.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DANUBE IN FROST—THE NEW HOTEL—VIEW OF BUDA — MR. TIERNEY CLARK'S BRIDGE — DIVIDED SOCIETY—STATE OF SOCIETY IN PESTH—DOMESTIC EMIGRATION—PROSPECTS, MORAL AND SOCIAL, OF HUNGARY—HACKNEY COACHES—WALLACHIAN WAGGONS—PEASANT TEAMS—AN HUNGARIAN FUNERAL —AUSTRIAN TROOPS — GARRISON OF PESTH — THE NEUGEBAU.

As I closed the last chapter, I walked to the window, to refresh myself for an instant after the outpouring of sententiousness in which I had just indulged, by glancing over river, hill, and valley; and marvelling for the thousandth time at the magnificent scene spread out before me. In order that my reader may be enabled to understand this, I must mention that we changed our place of abode, and established ourselves in a new Hotel, graced with the name of "The Queen

of England," and situated immediately at the termination of the bridge on the Pesth side of the Danube.

Nor must I refuse to this establishment the passing mention which it deserves, for it has removed from Pesth the hitherto well-merited reproach of affording worse accommodation to travellers than any other city of its size in Europe; there being probably few hotels now on the Continent which can surpass it. Formerly the mansion of a noble Hungarian family, it is elegant in its exterior, and very comfortable in its internal arrangements. A handsome coffee-room, and an extensive restaurant, are attached to the Hotel, the latter of which is supplied by a *chef* with two assistants. There are ninety-six excellent apartments in the house, and its cleanliness and comfort are almost English: its prices moderate, and its landlord intelligent and obliging.

But, alas! the windows of the *Fogadó az Angol Királynéhoz* soon ceased to afford us the pleasant pastime of watching for our Buda friends along the line of boats; for floating masses of ice, driven down by the current, compelled the autho-

rities to raise the bridge soon after our change of quarters, and as the passage across is still very dangerous, we are fairly cut off from our acquaintance in the sister-city, and must e'en "bide our time" until more severe weather has "bound the channel in thick-ribbed ice," and that we can walk over in our furs and snow-shoes.

Meanwhile, the scene is most extraordinary. The Blocksberg, the Spitsberg, and the distant mountain-line behind the fortress are draped in snow; the antique-looking houses, their *porte-cochères* yawning dark and wide, line the shore, and climb the heights beyond them; the vast palace looms down from its proud eminence like the guardian genius of the locality; and beneath rolls along the troubled river, with a thousand frozen islands floating down the current, now striking together, and parting again with a crashing sound; now sailing wide apart, glittering under the cold sunlight like masses of crystal; while among them labour across the flat-bottomed barges which form the rude and perilous substitute for the bridge; passing from shore to shore with shouts and cries;

now and then drowned by the report of firearms, as the sportsmen discharge their rifles at the wildfowl which sail shrieking over the city.

The novelty and variety of the whole panorama are extraordinary. It is so totally unlike anything which can be seen elsewhere, that one forgets the inconvenience in the amusement that is its concomitant. The rafts which are to convey carriages across are not yet completed, and our communication with Vienna is greatly impeded in consequence.

We are informed, however, that ere long the ice will form one compact body, upon which other masses borne down the different tributaries are frequently driven, one over the other, forming icebergs and mountains more picturesque than desirable.

The water is this year more than fifteen feet below the banks with which it was level last year; and the public mind is quite tranquil notwithstanding the frightful calamity which is still so recent.

The population of the two cities will have great

cause for rejoicing when the suspension-bridge of Mr. Tierney Clark is completed;* and contemplate with much satisfaction the preparations which have already commenced; for the raising of the line of boats is the destruction of a good deal of social intercourse; which is the more to be regretted that in a new and rising city like Pesth there is at all times less intercommunion than is desirable for the resident families.

To the *haute volée* the loss is that of the Court party; and the great difficulty of getting across the river to the Buda balls; this class of society can, however, better afford the inconvenience and deprivation, as they can console themselves at Presburg or Vienna as they may see fit: but the middle ranks are greater sufferers. Belonging less

* No mere assertion on the subject of this gentleman's talent and practical judgment, could so fully prove his claim both to the one and the other, as the fact that the workmen employed in digging for the foundations of the bridge, came upon the remains of a solid wall of stone, for whose existence no one was enabled to account; until, on searching the national records, it was discovered that on this very spot Matthias Corvinus had contemplated, and even commenced the erection of a bridge over the Danube.

to the world, and more to each other than their noble neighbours, those who chance to have formed friendships on the other bank of the river are in a great degree cut off from them for six months in the year; and meanwhile they are unable to supply their place at Pesth. This fact appears singular at the first glance, for it would seem that a population of sixty thousand persons must necessarily contain all the social elements necessary to the comfort of private life; but it must be remembered that only fifty years ago, the spots now occupied by some of the finest streets in the city were a dark swamp, the resort only of water-fowl and wandering tribes of Zingari, scarcely less amphibious than their winged neighbours; and that even within the last quarter of a century commerce alone engrossed all the energies of the population, who had no time to bestow on higher cares.

Now, however, that the moral progression of Pesth has advanced even more rapidly than its physical beauty, the feelings of the people have expanded, and the necessity for intellectual development has produced its immediate effect. The leisure hours of the careful father are beguiled by

witnessing the growing talents of his children, and the next generation will have no reason to repine at the social state of their city; but meanwhile, save among the learned professions, there is no society for the middle classes at Pesth: their enjoyments are derived from the theatres, occasional concerts, which are perhaps the most popular of all public entertainments, the Hungarians being universally devoted to music, to whose beauties they are keenly susceptible; the promenades, and those annual emigrations to the country in which they never fail to indulge.

The *déménagement* consequent on these latter excursions has always appeared to me so unaccountably and so unnecessarily tedious and inconvenient that I have not yet been able to reconcile it to my reason.

An Hungarian family possessing a country-house, when they visit this retreat either to superintend their harvest or their vintage, set forth, like the Israelites of old, with all their household gods about them. In order to make one residence habitable they dismantle the other; and the furniture is removed, packed into waggons, and transferred

as completely as though the change of abode was to be permanent.

The nobility alone dispense with this laborious species of economy; which entails the necessity of fresh labour on the return of the establishment townward.

It must not be supposed, however, that the bare walls of one deserted residence imply an inability on the part of its owner to leave it in a habitable state, and to enjoy equal comfort in the other; it is custom rather than necessity which prompts four-fifths of the Hungarians to this strange and inconvenient system of removal, which keeps the ladies of the family in anxiety and action that might well be spared.

These emigrations to the country may also account very considerably for the paucity of social intercourse in the city; an evil which bids fair to be removed a few years hence, when the present highly-educated youth shall have taken their places as citizens, without having previously been compelled like their fathers to give up the whole of their time and their energies to commerce from their early years; a necessity which grows into

habit, and incapacitates the merchant from bringing his share to the common stock of social communion.

He first teaches himself to dispense with the intimate and daily courtesies of life in the more exciting interests of his vocation—he makes friends of his ledgers, and companions of his bales—he gradually frees himself from his social duties in his personal avocations, and he ultimately learns to dispense with them altogether because they bring no tangible profit to his hearth. But as all things develope themselves about him; as he sees palaces raise their proud portals where the soil once lay waste, or was at best cumbered by some peasant's hovel; as every wind wafts to his threshold tidings of chance and change; as his wealth accumulates, and luxury creeps in where only comfort formerly presided; and, above all, as he sees his children grow up about him, and remembers the pleasureless labours of his own youth; his soul expands with his means, he becomes ambitious for his successors, he desires that they should keep pace with the progress about them; and a new era is thus al-

most unconsciously prepared, which is rich in promise for Hungary.

Meanwhile to a stranger, Pesth as a city is unusually attractive, although I am bound to admit that the dust to which I have already made allusion as a summer nuisance, becomes mud in the winter, and thus only produces a change of evils; which is scarcely diminished to a feeling mind by the fact of its removal by the fettered convicts of the prisons, whose chains keep up an unholy accompaniment to their labour; but there is such a constant variety and movement in its streets, such a blending of the Oriental with the European, and such a holiday look about the whole population, that it is almost impossible to feel ennui in the chief city of the Magyars.

Nor must I, while on the subject of the streets, omit mention of so apparently unimportant a feature in their general appearance as the hackney-coachés; for Pesth in this particular puts not only Paris, but almost Vienna itself to the blush. I do not include London in the comparison; for with all my prejudice in favour of my own country, I cannot conceal from myself that the public car-

riages in London are disgraceful in every point of view; unsafe, filthy, and too frequently drawn by horses which it would be merciful to destroy, in order to put them out of their misery.

Nothing so revolting as a London coach-stand is to be seen at Pesth. The carriages which ply for hire are neat calashes or chariots, generally as clean as though they were the property of a private individual, and frequently as neat and well-ordered as the second class of vehicles driven by families in England; always provided with good and well-conditioned horses, and smart drivers; and presentable anywhere. In this respect we are decidedly a century behind the Hungarians.

Contrasted with these cleanly and comfortable carriages are the peasant-waggons; long, narrow, wicker-formed vehicles, occasionally covered in with coarse serge blankets, but generally entirely open. Those of the Wallachians are the most extraordinary to a stranger, for it is by no means unusual to see them drawn by thirty horses, the whole team of the owner, who finds it more convenient to have them thus under his own eye than

to leave them to encounter the casualties incidental to his absence from home.

It is very common to see nine horses in these waggons, four abreast next the vehicle, preceded by three, and these again by two. The driver sits on the front of the carriage with a long whip, and the reins of rope carelessly dangling from his hand; the animals are tied together with cords in a most primitive manner, and look as though they would all break loose before they had travelled a mile; but as though such an event were altogether out of the question, they tear along the bad roads at full gallop, with their heads down, one turning to the right, another to the left, a third running straight forward, but all brought into order in turn by the voice of the driver, who keeps up a continual *feu de joie* of reproach and encouragement that quite supersedes the use of the whip, which is rather carried as a plaything than as a mean of correction.

"Where are you running to, Rose? Do you want to upset us into the ditch? Fritz, my beauty, pull away; you are worth a thousand sluggards.

After work comes corn.—It is lucky for you, Tulip, that I am not beside you, for I should pull your tail, for a sloth as you are!"

Thus he talks; and each horse, when he addresses it, sets its ears, and as the long but innoxious lash of the whip indicates the side towards which it is to incline, it obeys with a docility which can alone account for the holding together of the frail waggon, and still frailer harness; and the immense pace at which they travel.

Another description of carriage, very remarkable in this country, is the hearse; so remarkable indeed that I must describe it. It is a bier, raised upon four wheels, which are screened by a covering of wood exactly resembling the paddle-box of a steam-vessel, and entirely draped with black cloth, drawn by three or four horses clothed in sable serge exactly as the chargers of the knights of old were clad in golden stuffs, or chain-mail—over head and body, with the draperies hanging nearly to the earth.

Upon the bier rests the coffin, shaped like an ancient sarcophagus, with a shelving lid, painted

in black or white, according to the age and social position of the deceased, and lettered with gold. Over this coffin is flung the pall of velvet or linen edged with point lace; and beside it walk the bearers carrying long waxen tapers decorated with pendents of crape, ready for service at the grave. Before it walk half a dozen musicians, playing on wind instruments, whose lugubrious sounds form a solemn accompaniment to the voices of the choristers; the priests, the choir, and the cross-bearer; and behind it come the funeral guests, for to call them "mourners" were to profane the term.

The interment of a respectable individual is frequently attended by two hundred persons walking in double file through the streets, from the residence of the dead to the cemetery which is to receive his remains; the men move on first, immediately behind the hearse; and then the women: only the nearest relatives wear mourning, or such of the party as possessing black garments, pay the family of the deceased the compliment of appearing in them on the occasion; and this large assemblage is collected by the principal under-

taker, who is summoned directly that life is extinct; by the friends of the dead person; and who having received his instructions, appears in a crape scarf which is fastened under one arm with a bunch of artificial roses, and carrying a wand wreathed with crape in his hand, to the end of which is affixed an orange or a lemon, at the house of all such individuals as are desired to attend the funeral.

I chanced on one occasion to be standing in the shop of Mr. Hartleben, turning over some books which he had just received from Leipsic, when one of these ill-omened inviters made his appearance. He advanced no further than the threshold, and having silently saluted the master of the house, he said slowly; "You are requested to assist, at eleven o'clock to-morrow, at the funeral of ——, who expired at ten this morning;" and then, without awaiting a reply, he made a second bow, and departed.

Another peculiar feature in these funerals is a number of wands terminated by a taper draped with crape, to which is attached an orange like that of the undertaker, carried by the mourners,

or nearest friends of the deceased immediately about the body; a custom which was at once explained to me as having originated during the period when Pesth was visited by the plague, the odour of the fruit having been esteemed a safeguard against the pestilential vapours supposed to exhale from the body; and since continued from the mere superstitious force of habit.

The procession is terminated by the private carriages and hackney coaches retained by the company to convey them from the city to the burial-ground. The dress of the females is, however, the most startling portion of the spectacle; every colour of the rainbow is to be seen in succession; bare shoulders and uncovered arms are common among them: and the gayest bonnets and shawls give to the street through which they pass the appearance of a bed of tulips.

I once watched the procession following a young Countess (who had died at the age of twenty-five,) through the Waitzner Gasse, and I have seldom seen more coquetry of toilet displayed either by men or women, than among the individuals who had alighted from the nine-and-

thirty carriages which were slowly pursuing the death-bier, to do her honour.

Another circumstance which tends to render this extraordinary custom still more revolting to strangers, is the fact that only a few short hours previously the senseless form which precedes the smiling, chatting, careless crowd that moves along behind it, was a being sentient as themselves; for the Hungarians scarcely ever suffer two suns to set upon their dead.

I was struck with the Orientalism of this custom, as well as by the form of the coffins, which is precisely similar to that used at Constantinople; the only difference being that here the sarcophagus is ornamented and raised upon gilded feet, while in Turkey the strong-scented cypress-wood is simply planed, and partially covered by a green shawl.

Imagine this *bizarre* funeral to have passed; and the martial band, gradually growing upon your ear, will prepare you for the approach of an Austrian regiment returning from a field day. I I say *returning*, for unless my readers are much

more early risers than myself, they are never likely to see one marching out to review.

In this country, people seem to have almost discovered the art of living without sleep, and so far from joining in the murmurs of other travellers on the subject of the comfortless beds of Germany, I am really inclined to marvel that any are to be met with of whatever description. We go to a *soirée* in the evening, where we remain until near midnight, and by seven o'clock in the morning our amiable hostess, as she drives past the hotel on some errand of health or pleasure, stops to enquire how we have passed the night; and is quite surprised to find that we are yet invisible, when she has already transacted a score of those little commissions which help the idle to consume their time.

Thus, I repeat, as an Englishwoman, you have little chance of seeing the regiment march *out;* and in order that you may fully appreciate the very fine-looking troops heralded by the band, you must not meet them in the height of summer, when they invariably return to the city half

smothered with dust; and as though this were not enough in itself to destroy their appearance, clad in dirty clinging surtouts of brown-holland, about the most unsoldier-like garments that ever were invented either by economy or bad taste.

I will suppose, therefore, that the regiment are not seen in their pinafores, but in their handsome and well-made uniforms, with their bright-barrelled muskets flashing in the sunshine, and oak-leaves surmounting their chakos—a piece of bravery, by the way, more picturesque than national. I can understand our own gallant fellows on the anniversary of a victory, bearing above their brows the symbol of their triumph; and consequently can readily comprehend that the Austrian soldiers feel an equal pride in commemorating their own glories; but the oak-branch which lifted upon every head makes them collectively "a walking wood of Dulsinane," each time that they are marched a mile out of the town to be reviewed, is an extravagance which I confess that I have not yet been able to reconcile to my previous idea of the phlegm, and sober good sense of the Germans.

A better view of the troops may be obtained should they chance to encounter a procession, (no unusual circumstance in Pesth,) when they invariably halt to let it pass; and these military apparitions are neither few nor far between, for Pesth may truly be called a garrison town.

I believe that I have elsewhere mentioned the admirable policy of Austria, which sends her provincial soldiery as much from home as possible, retaining a comparatively small force in their native country; and my assertion is borne out in this city, where the troops consist of:—three Battalions of Polish Infantry, amounting to two thousand men; one Battalion of Hungarian Infantry amounting to eight hundred; and a Regiment of Artillery, of which seven companies are dispersed in the provinces, and whose strength is two thousand; making a total of four thousand eight hundred.

The Austrian Artillery is composed almost entirely of Germans, the Poles who have been admitted into this favoured force being few in number, and the Hungarians still fewer, although they occupy the principal barrack in Pesth, the

magnificent Nugebau; erected at an enormous expense by the Emperor Joseph in 1786, in the centre of what was then a dreary swamp on the Viennese side of the town.

This building, when carefully examined, is very remarkable in its construction, being so formed as to command from all its fronts the sweep of the country. It is, in short, an inland fortress of immense extent, well calculated to defend the city; four stories in height, and surrounding as many interior courts, one of which is of extraordinary dimensions. Strangers are often told wild tales of vast subterraneans stretching far under the gigantic building; but I have taken pains to ascertain the fact, and have every reason to believe that they are mere fables got up for the amusement of the credulous.

That it is at present diverted from its original purpose there can be little doubt; indeed, it would probably be difficult to appropriate it suitably unless the whole world were in arms, and that an edifice were required to garrison a nation, so enormous are its dimensions.

Meanwhile the few men who inhabit its co-

lossal courts and chambers are troops whose appearance would do honour to any country; and were it not for their *rococo* hats, under which Adonis himself would scarcely look human, better-dressed soldiers could nowhere be found.

END OF VOL. II.

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